

## APOCALYPSE POSTPONED

**VANESSA GERA**  
Associated Press

Though the Mayans never really predicted that the world would end on Friday, some New Agers are convinced that humanity's demise is indeed imminent. Or at least that it's a good excuse for a party. Believers are being drawn to spots where they think



A dog plays with a tennis ball backdropped by the Pic de Bugarach mountain in the town of Bugarach, France, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012. (AP Photo)

their chances of survival will be better, and accompanying them are the curious, the party-lovers and people wanting to make some money. The following are some of the world's key doomsday destinations and other places marked by fear and fascination over the apocalypse.

Continued on Page 3

## Winter Blast!



A local resident clears snow from his driveway after an overnight snowfall left many schools and businesses closed for the day, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012, in Urbandale, Iowa.

(AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)

## Snow blankets Midwest in season's first major storm

**DAVID PITT**  
**MARGERY BECK**  
Associated Press  
**DES MOINES, Iowa (AP)**

— The first widespread snowstorm of the season crawled across the Midwest on Thursday, with whiteout conditions stranding holiday travelers and sending drivers sliding over slick roads — including into a fatal 25-vehicle pileup in Iowa.

The storm, which dumped a foot of snow in parts of Iowa and Wisconsin, was part of a system that began in the Rockies earlier in the week before trekking into the Midwest. It was expected to move across the Great Lakes overnight before moving into Canada. The storm led airlines to cancel about 1,000 flights ahead of the Christmas holiday — relatively few

compared to past big storms, though the number was climbing. On the southern edge of the system, tornadoes destroyed several homes in Arkansas and peeled the roofs from buildings, toppled trucks and blew down oak trees and limbs Alabama. In Iowa, drivers were blinded by blowing snow and didn't see vehicles that

had slowed or stopped on Interstate 35 about 60 miles north of Des Moines, state police said. A chain reaction of crashes involving semitrailers and passenger cars closed down a section of the highway. Officials said two people were killed and seven injured.

Continued on Page 2



### KONG FUI SHOPPING CENTER

EASY ACCESS TO 1ST FLOOR & 2ND FLOOR  
LOCATED WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF THE HIGHRISE HOTELS

OPEN DAILY: 8 A.M. TO 10 P.M.  
SUNDAY: 9 A.M. TO 8 P.M.

PALM BEACH 17-A | NOORD | TEL: 586-9888 FAX: 586-9886 • [info@kongfui.com](mailto:info@kongfui.com)



# Snow blankets Midwest in season's first major storm

Continued from front

"It's time to listen to warnings and get off the road," said Iowa State Patrol Col. David Garrison.

Thomas Shubert, a clerk at a store in Gretna near Omaha, Neb., said his brother drove him to work in his truck, but some of his neighbors weren't so fortunate.

"I saw some people in my neighborhood trying to get out. They made it a few feet, and that was about it," Shubert said.

Along with Thursday's fatal accident in Iowa, the storm was blamed for traffic deaths in Nebraska, Kansas and Wisconsin. In southeastern Utah, a woman who tried to walk for help after her car became stuck in snow died Tuesday night. The heavy, wet snow made some unplowed streets in Des Moines nearly impossible to

navigate in anything other than a four-wheel drive vehicle. Even streets that had been plowed were snow-packed and slippery.

The storm made travel diffi-

lows through Albert Lea, Minn.

Sections of Interstate 80 in Nebraska and Interstate 29 in Missouri that had been closed were reopened



**Snow-covered cars in a parking lot greet early morning risers in Madison, Wis. as a severe winter storm moves through the upper Midwest Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012.**

(AP Photo/John Hart)

cult from Kansas to Wisconsin, forcing road closures, including a 120-mile stretch of Interstate 35 from Ames,

Thursday afternoon. Iowa and Wisconsin activated National Guard troops to help rescue stranded driv-

ers.

Those who planned to fly before the Christmas holiday didn't fare much better.

In Chicago, commuters began Thursday with heavy fog and cold, driving rain, and forecasters said snow would hit by mid-afternoon. Airlines delayed and canceled hundreds of flights out of Chicago's O'Hare and Midway international airports. Southwest Airlines canceled all of its flights at its Midway hub that were scheduled for after 4:30 p.m., and American Airlines said it was shutting down its O'Hare operations after 8 p.m.

Airlines were waiving fees for customers impacted by the storm who wanted to change their flights. They were monitoring the storm throughout the night to determine if more cancellations would be necessary on Friday.

The cancellations were getting a lot of attention because the storm came just a few days before Christmas. But Daniel Baker, CEO of flight tracking service FlightAware.com called it "a relatively minor event in the overall scheme of things."

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of people lost power in Arkansas, Iowa and Nebraska as heavy snow and strong winds pulled down lines. Smaller outages were reported in Alabama, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Louisiana.

"The roads have been so bad our crews have not been able to respond to them," said Justin Foss, a spokesman for Alliant Energy, which had 13,000 customers without power in central Iowa. "We have giant four-wheel-drive trucks with chains on them, so when we can't get there it's pretty rough." □

## FREE SHIRT FRIDAY!



**Get a FREE Alhambra T-Shirt when you earn 500 points today with your Alhambra Advantage Card!**

Alhambra cap may be substituted for t-shirt.



### The Shops at Alhambra Casino

#### Dining

- Baskin-Robbins
- Dunkin' Donuts
- Fusion ~ Piano, Cigar & Wine Bar
- Ginger ~ Asian Flavors
- Juan Valdez Café
- Little Caesars
- Subway

#### Retail

- Aruba Aloe
- Aruba Memories
- Daher & Company
- Diamonds International
- Divi Logo Shop
- Intermezzo ~ The Salon
- R-Glass
- The Lazy Lizard
- The Market



**Where Aruba goes to play!**

Open daily 10am to 4am • J.E. Irausquin Blvd #47 • 583.5000 • [www.casinoalhambra.com](http://www.casinoalhambra.com)

Must be an Alhambra Advantage member. All programs and promotions are subject to change or cancellation without prior notice.

**Alhambra**  
CASINO AND SHOPS



# NEW ARRIVALS

Salvatore Ferragamo

## NEW LOCATION

THE PALM BEACH PLAZA MALL - WALKING DISTANCE FROM HIGH RISE HOTELS AND THE MARRIOTT

## Global doomsday hot spots draw believers, revelers

### Continued from front

#### U.S.

For some, doomsday will be a chance for mockery. Giorgio A. Tsoukalos, producer and host of the History Channel's "Ancient Aliens" program, is throwing a party in New Orleans on Friday where he will descend onstage in a mock spaceship. Tsoukalos is a proponent of the idea that ancient myths arose from visits by alien astronauts, an idea rejected by many mainstream researchers. Still, Tsoukalos scoffs at the idea that the world will come to an end Friday.

#### FRANCE

According to one rumor, a rocky mountain in the French Pyrenees will be the sole place on earth to escape destruction. A giant UFO and aliens are said to be waiting under the mountain, ready to burst through and spirit those nearby to safety. But here is bad news for those seeking salvation: French gendarmes, some on horseback, are blocking outsiders from reaching the Bugarach peak and its village of some 200 people. One believer, Ludovic Broquet, a 30-year-old plumber, made his way to

the mountain after a year of preparation, hoping to find a "gateway, the vortex that will open up here (at) the end of the world." Local residents, instead,

#### BRITAIN

Hundreds of people have already converged on Stonehenge for an "End of the World" party that coincides with the Win-

at it more as a new beginning than an end," he said. "We're looking at new hope." Meanwhile, end-of-days parties will be held across London on Friday.

day there were more journalists and security officials present there than cultists — to the great disappointment of local restaurateurs and souvenir shop owners. Nobody was quite sure where Sirince's alleged powers to survive the Mayan doomsday come from, but the idyllic village in western Turkey is close to an area where the Virgin Mary is believed to have lived her final days, and some New Agers reportedly believe the region has a positive aura. For months, local business owners have been promoting the village and even produced wines with special labels to commemorate the event.

#### ITALY

Another spot said to be spared: Cisternino, in southern Italy, plans a big party Friday with hot-air balloons and music in the main piazza. "Nobody will want to sleep anyway as they await the end of the world," Mayor Donato Baccaro was quoted as saying in the newspaper La Stampa on Wednesday. Though Baccaro goes on to say he doesn't really believe the end is coming, hundreds have reportedly booked hotel rooms. □



Mayan priests place flowers for a ceremony at Iximche archeological site in preparation for the Oxlajuj B'aktun in Tecpan, Guatemala, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012. The Oxlajuj B'aktun is on Dec. 21, marking a new period in the Mayan calendar, an event only comparable in recent times with the new millennium in 2000.

(AP Photo)

are skeptical — and angry at having their peace disturbed. "What is going on here is the creation of an urban legend," fumed resident Michele Pous, who blamed those who spread Internet rumors. "They created a media frenzy, they created a false event, they manipulated people."

ter Solstice. Arthur Uther Pendragon, Britain's best-known druid, said he was anticipating a much larger crowd than usual at Stonehenge this year. But he doesn't agree that the world is ending, noting that he and fellow druids believe that things happen in cycles. "We're looking

One event billed as a "last supper club" is offering a three-course meal served inside of an "ark."

#### TURKEY

A small Turkish village known for its wines, Sirince, has also been touted as the only place after Bugarach that would escape the world's end. But on Thurs-



# Bernard Madoff's brother gets 10-year sentence

COLLEEN LONG  
LARRY NEUMEISTER  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The brother of imprisoned financier Bernard Madoff was sentenced Thursday to 10 years in prison for crimes committed in the shadow of his notorious sibling by a judge who said she disbelieved his claims that he did not know about the epic fraud.

Peter Madoff, 67, had agreed when he pleaded guilty in June to serve the maximum sentence allowable to the charges of conspiracy and falsifying the books and records of an investment adviser. He follows to prison his 74-year-old brother, who is serving a 150-year sentence after admitting he created a fraud so large decades ago that thousands of people lost \$20 billion.

U.S. District Judge Laura Taylor Swain urged Pe-



**Peter Madoff, left, and his attorney John Wing exit Manhattan federal court after receiving a sentence, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012, in New York.**

(AP Photo/Louis Lanzano)

ter Madoff to tell the truth even now about what he knows about the fraud that cost thousands of investors their original \$20 billion investment.

The judge said Peter Madoff, wearing a well-tailored charcoal suit, was "frankly not believable" when he claimed at his

plea that he only learned of the fraud when his brother revealed it to him just before he surrendered to authorities.

Peter Madoff spoke only briefly, saying: "I am deeply ashamed of my conduct and have tried to atone by pleading guilty and have agreed to forfeit all of my

present and future assets." He added: "I am profoundly sorry that my failures let many people down, including my loved ones."

Two investors, among 40 who wrote victim impact statements, spoke during the proceeding, each describing the financial ruins of their extended family. Investor Michael T. De Vita, 62, also called for truth, saying he believed "it to be physically impossible for a single person to carry out such a gargantuan task all by himself."

De Vita said investors "have waited four years for others to accept responsibility for this massive crime. We are still waiting for that today." "All of this was preventable if only one person was willing to do the right thing and stop this in its tracks years ago. Peter Madoff could have been that person," he said.

Amy Luria Nissenbaum, 49, choking up at times, also

complained that Peter Madoff had chosen even after his plea to "turn a blind eye" to his brother's fraud, saying her home was in foreclosure and some days she struggles to "clothe and feed my children."

Nissenbaum said Peter Madoff was part of his brother's fraud for more than 30 years and he should serve the same amount of time in prison.

When Swain announced that Peter Madoff will not have to report to prison until Feb. 6, Nissenbaum laughed out loud bitterly. The delay in reporting to prison will let Peter Madoff attend his granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah on Jan. 19.

The judge noted that 10 years was the maximum sentence allowed by the charges to which Madoff had pled and repeatedly urged Madoff to relieve the pain of investors by revealing more about the Madoff business.



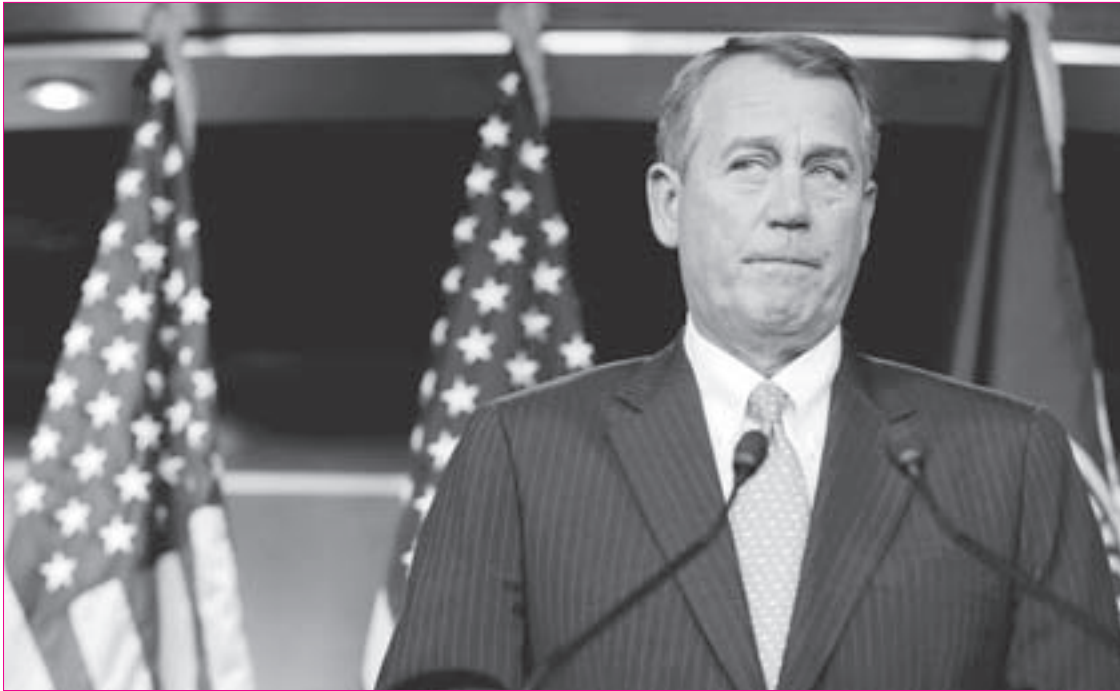
*T*USCANY *R*ESIDENCE ARUBA  
luxury living on the island of Aruba

Call 586 0135 for a  
**FREE PICK-UP**

Visit our model home at Saliña Serca 197, Noord  
[www.tuscanyresidencearuba.com](http://www.tuscanyresidencearuba.com)  
Choose from stylish condominiums and interconnected Villas



# House GOP abruptly yanks 'Plan B' vote



House Speaker Rep. John Boehner of Ohio, pauses while speaking to the media about the fiscal cliff on Capitol Hill in Washington, on Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012.

(AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin)

## House approves \$633B defense bill

**DONNA CASSATA**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The House on Thursday overwhelmingly passed a \$633 billion defense bill for next year despite Pentagon complaints that it spares outdated but politically popular weapons at the expense of the military's ability to fight.

The vote was 315-107 and sent the legislation to the Senate, where leaders hoped to wrap up the measure. The White House had threatened a veto of earlier versions of the bill, and spokesman Jay Carney said Thursday that the threat still stands.

The far-reaching policy bill that covers the cost of ships, aircraft, weapons and military personnel would authorize \$528 billion for the Defense Department's base budget, \$17 billion for defense and nuclear programs in the Energy Department and \$88.5 billion for the war in Afghanistan.

The bill is \$1.7 billion more than Obama requested. House Republicans and Democrats debated the measure against the backdrop of high-stakes talks to avert the so-called fiscal cliff of automatic tax hikes and spending cuts and the

loud cry for a sweeping deal to slash the deficit. Democrats argued that the bill runs counter to demands for fiscal discipline. "This bill is more money than the Pentagon wants," said Rep. Jim McGovern. "We're just throwing money at them."

Specifically, the bill spares a version of the Global Hawk unmanned aircraft, includes upgrades for tanks and money for armored vehicles.

In a speech this week, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta criticized the pressure on the Pentagon to keep weapons that it doesn't want. "Aircraft, ships, tanks, bases, even those that have outlived their usefulness, have a natural political constituency. Readiness does not," Panetta said.

"What's more, readiness is too often sacrificed in favor of a larger and less effective force. I am determined to avoid that outcome," he said.

Panetta said members of the House and Senate "diverted about \$74 billion of what we asked for in savings in our proposed budget to the Congress, and they diverted them to other areas that, frankly, we don't need."

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Howard "Buck" McKeon insisted that the bill "safeguards military readiness in times of declining budgets."

The bill responds to the new threats and upheaval around the globe while still providing billions for the decade-plus war in Afghanistan. The measure would tighten sanctions on Iran, increase security at diplomatic missions worldwide after the deadly Sept. 11 raid in Libya and presses the military on possible options to end the bloodshed in Syria.

The final measure, a product of negotiations between the House and Senate, addresses several concerns raised by the Obama administration. It eliminates restrictions on alternative fuels that the White House had complained about and jettisons limits on the administration's ability to implement a nuclear weapons reduction treaty. The bill does limit the president's authority to transfer terror suspects from the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for one year — a provision similar to current law. That had drawn complaints from the White House. □

**DAVID ESPO**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Confronted with a revolt among the rank and file, House Republicans abruptly put off a vote Thursday night on legislation allowing tax rates to rise for households earning \$1 million and up, complicating attempts to avoid a year-end fiscal cliff that threatens to send the economy into recession. In a brief statement, House Speaker John Boehner said the bill "did not have sufficient support from our members to pass." At the same time he challenged President Barack Obama

and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., to work on legislation to avert the fiscal cliff.

"The Senate must now act," he said.

Emerging from a hurriedly-called evening meeting of House Republicans, Ohio Rep.

Steve LaTourette said Boehner had told lawmakers, "He's going to call the president and he's going to go down and talk to him and maybe they can hammer something out."

There was no immediate response from either the White House or Reid's office. □

## Enjoy our much celebrated 3-Course Dinner Special!

### Appetizer

- Fish Soup
- Onion Soup
- Conch Fritters
- Escargot
- Salad

### Entrée

- **Fresh Catch of the Day**  
prepared by our local chef just the way you like it.
- **Jumbo Shrimp** from our local waters, breaded served with potato or rice or with garlic tossed over linguine.
- **Filet Mignon\*** 8 oz. US Tenderloin
- **Grilled Boneless Chicken Breast**

### Dessert

- Chocolate or Banana Cake
- Ice Cream
- Coffee / Tea

3-course dinner  
**\$25.95**  
per person

This special cannot be used with any other promotions, vouchers or certificates.



25th ANNIVERSARY

Open daily from 5:00pm - 10:30pm (closed on Sundays)  
For reservations call: **583-2515** - Klipstraat 12, Downtown.  
www.driftwoodaruba.com • driftwood@setarnet.aw





# Sawasdee Thai

## RESTAURANT

Palm Beach 186, next to Wendy's  
Phone 586-8071 • info@sawasdee-aruba.com



## Everything made fresh to order!

- **Steak -**
- **Seafood**
- **Curries**
- **Vegetarian**




**Delicious Rice Table for two**

**Open Monday - Saturday from 5pm - 10:30pm • Sunday CLOSED!**

# Bloomberg vows stiffer fight to overhaul gun laws

**MICHAEL M. GRYNBAUM**

© 2012 New York Times

**NEW YORK** — Ask Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg about firearms, and his usual stoic facade falls away, revealing anger and exasperation born of years of witnessing the blood and tears that can flow from gun violence.

Now, furious at the deadly school shooting in Newtown, Conn., and frustrated by inaction in Congress, Bloomberg said in an interview this week that he would ratchet up his fight to overhaul gun laws, drawing on his considerable political and financial resources. One of the world's wealthiest men, Bloomberg plans to spend millions of dollars over the next two years to

aid political candidates willing to oppose the gun lobby. He said he would not wait until 2014: The mayor's super PAC is already looking at special elections next year, including governor's races and an open U.S. House seat in Illinois.

The mayor plans an advertising campaign featuring Hollywood stars.

And he has spoken with the White House, conferring with Vice President Joe Biden about the presidential task force on gun policy that Biden will lead.

"I'm in the enviable position of knowing there's a need and having the wherewithal to do things, and the credibility to get other people to do it, as well," Bloomberg said.

Even so, the mayor is looking to move fast, aware that public outrage can fade quickly.

for change. "Some of my friends say, 'You're not going to get this done.'"

Until last year, the mayor's

vantage of the super PAC phenomenon to inject unlimited amounts of his own money into campaigns across the country.

His goal is to provide backing for politicians who risk rejection from voters by supporting gun control.

"If people believe you are going to go out there and protect them when they make the right vote, that will make it easier," he said.

Bloomberg declined to specify how much he was prepared to spend.

But the mayor, whose net worth has been estimated at \$25 billion, said he felt obligated to use his fortune to try. "If you told me that I could write a check today and stop 48,000 murders in America in the next four years, can you imagine me not?" he said, his voice cracking slightly.

"What kind of a person would I be?" □



**Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York, center, speaks about gun violence at a news conference at City Hall in New York, Dec. 17, 2012. Bloomberg, furious at the deadly school shootings in Connecticut and what he sees as inaction from the nation's leaders, said he would draw on his political and financial resources to bring about change.**

(Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times)

"Whether this lasts or not, I don't know," he conceded, referring to the mood

advocacy was limited by campaign finance laws, but now he can take ad-

## Gay rights group challenges Hagel comments

**DONNA CASSATA**

**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A major gay-rights group said Thursday that Chuck Hagel's comments on gays and his past votes are "unacceptable," another strike against the former Republican senator's chances of becoming the next defense secretary.

Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, said in a statement that the comments and Hagel's "consistent anti-LGBT" record in the Senate raise serious questions about where he stands on the issues today.

"The next secretary of defense must be supportive of open service as well as equal benefits for lesbian and gay military families and Sen. Hagel must ad-

dress these issues immediately," Griffin said. "Whom-ever is selected to be the next secretary of defense needs to understand there are clear expectations for progress at the (Defense Department) and that the president's views on key issues must be reflected by the secretary." Specifically, the group said Hagel must repudiate remarks he made in 1998 about James Hormel, then President Bill Clinton's nominee for ambassador to Luxembourg. In an interview with the Omaha World-Herald, Hagel referred to Hormel as "openly, aggressively gay."

"For him to be an appropriate candidate for any administration post, he must repudiate his comments about Ambassador Hormel," Griffin said. Griffin's con-

cerns about Hagel could influence Obama. Griffin is a well-connected Hollywood political consultant who has led the Human Rights Campaign since last summer. He was among Obama's top fundraisers before taking the helm of the gay rights organization and raising more than \$500,000 for the president's re-election. Griffin was instrumental in recruiting the legal team of Theodore Olson and David Boies, who successfully challenged the ban on same-sex marriage in California, a case now headed to the Supreme Court. Hagel is considered a top candidate to replace Leon Panetta at the Pentagon although a number of senators have expressed serious reservations about a nomination. □

# WACKY wah's

PALM BEACH #33-A WWW.WACKYWAHOOS.COM

**STEAK, SEAFOOD, B.B.Q. & FUN!**

Ex-Hadicurari BBQ & Grill with the same owner's. We do our own daily fishing so we serve the freshest seafood on the Island.

**Very reasonable price, exciting menu and  
NO SERVICE CHARGE**

**Dinner from 5:30 - 10:00**

**Monday - Saturday**



**FRESH CATCH & SEAFOOD**


We are located close to the High-rise hotel's at walking distance.

**RESERVATION REQUIRED**

**TEL: 586-7333**







**The Morning Cruise the Different Island Cruise**  
 2 hours + refreshments, Departure 9:30 till 11:30 am  
 \* See the beautiful South part of the Island  
 \* Where no other boats go.  
 \* Experience an Xciting, Xhilarating on of a kind Cruise!! and you learn something about the Island @ the same time!

**\$55**

Save \$10 per couple for the morning cruise or save \$5 per couple for the afternoon cruise

**The Afternoon Cruise 30 min departure 1:00pm or 2:00pm**  
 \* We take you to the northern tip of Aruba, where the waves are high  
 \* The Worlds nr 2 Beach and other Beaches  
 \* One of a kind High Speed Cruise of the North West side of the Island & you learn something about the Island @ the same time!

**\$35**

Departure from MooMba Beach. 15 min prior right side of the pier. Guests who are staying at Palm Beach pick-up will be on the beach in front of the hotel.

**Private cruises**  
 Available

**CALL 5614118**  
 OR  
[OCEANXARUBA@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:OCEANXARUBA@HOTMAIL.COM)  
 A great time for the whole family

# Texas town allows teachers to carry concealed guns

**ANGELA K. BROWN**  
**Associated Press**  
**HARROLD, Texas (AP)** — In this tiny Texas town, children and their parents don't give much thought to safety at the community's lone school — mostly because some of the teachers are

allowing teachers and school administrators to carry firearms at school. Texas law bans guns in schools unless the school has given written authorization. Arizona and six other states have similar laws with exceptions for people

teachers. "I think it's a great idea for trained teachers to carry weapons," Reinish said. "But I hate that it has come to this." The superintendent won't disclose how many of the school's 50 employees carry weapons, saying that revealing that number might jeopardize school security. The school, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) northwest of Fort Worth near the

Oklahoma border, has 103 students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Most of them rarely think about who is carrying a gun. "This is the first time in a long time that I've thought about it," said Matt Templeton, the principal's 17-year-old son. "And that's because of what happened" in Connecticut. Thweatt said other Texas schools allow teachers to

carry weapons, but he would not reveal their locations, saying they are afraid of negative publicity. The Texas Education Agency said it had not heard of any other schools with such a policy. And the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence did not know of any other districts nationwide that allow school employees to carry concealed handguns. □



**Students arrive at the Harrold Independent School District in Harrold, Texas. The school has a policy allowing teachers and other employees to carry concealed weapons on campus. (AP Photo)**

carrying concealed weapons. In remote Harrold, the nearest sheriff's office is 30 minutes away, and people tend to know — and trust — one another. So the school board voted to let teachers bring guns to school. "We don't have money for a security guard, but this is a better solution," Superintendent David Thweatt said. "A shooter could take out a guard or officer with a visible, holstered weapon, but our teachers have master's degrees, are older and have had extensive training. And their guns are hidden. We can protect our children." In the awful aftermath of last week's Connecticut elementary school shooting, lawmakers in a growing number of states — including Oklahoma, Missouri, Minnesota, South Dakota and Oregon — have said they will consider laws al-

lowing teachers and school administrators to carry concealed weapons. Harrold's school board voted unanimously in 2007 to allow employees to carry weapons. After obtaining a state concealed-weapons permit, each employee who wants to carry a weapon must be approved by the board based on his or her personality and reaction to a crisis, Thweatt said. Employees also must undergo training in crisis intervention and hostage situations. And they must use bullets that minimize the risk of ricochet, similar to those carried by air marshals on planes. CaRae Reinisch, who lives in the nearby community of Elliott, said she took her children out of a larger school and enrolled them in Harrold two years ago, partly because she felt they would be safer in a building with armed

## Join Us for the Holidays

at the Sunset Grille

**Christmas Eve**

**Christmas Day**

**New Year's Eve**  
**Grand Caribbean Ballroom**

Cream of Vegetable Soup, Escargot on Toast, Sunset Salad  
 Entrees, choice of one: **Surf & Turf, Grilled Rack of Lamb, Cornish Game Hen, Crusted Seabass Filet**  
 Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Steamed Asparagus & Sautéed Mushrooms  
 Dessert: Trio of Crème Brûlée, Chocolate Cake or Brûche de Noel

Adults - \$125.00 | Children Ages 6-12 - \$70.00  
*Includes Welcome Kir Royal*

Lobster Bisque, Chicken Mushroom Vol au Vent, Sunset Salad  
 Entrees, choice of one: **Lobster Thermidor, Beef Tenderloin, Free Range Chicken Provencale, Chilean Seabass Filet**  
 Garlic Mashed Potatoes and Stir-fried Vegetables  
 Dessert: Chocolate Yule Log, Chocolate Mousse or Chocolate Ice Cream

Adults - \$149.00 | Children Ages 6-12 - \$79.00  
*Includes Welcome Champagne and 2 Glasses of Wine*

Lobster Bisque, Sunset Salad  
 Entrees, choice of one: **Lobster Thermidor, Beef Tenderloin, Free Range Chicken Provencale, Chilean Seabass Filet**  
 Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Steamed Asparagus & Sautéed Mushrooms  
 Dessert: Warm Apple Pie with Hot Pineapple Chunks and Vanilla Ice Cream

Adults - \$195.00 | Children Ages 6-12 - \$95.00  
*Dinner in Sunset Grille includes 2 Glasses of Wine plus Entrance to the Countdown Celebration in the Ballroom with Premium Open Bar & Snacks from 10:00 pm to 1:30 am*

\*Prices are subject to tax and service charge. Children age 5 and under eat free.

**For reservations: 526-6612 or 526-6613**  
**[radissonconcierge@depalmtours.com](mailto:radissonconcierge@depalmtours.com)**






**Europcar****SPECIAL**

- Attractive Rates
- Free Pick-Up
- Fast & Friendly Service
- Free Roas Map



Excluding Taxes

Call us for Pick-up at

**583-0200**

## France hosts secretive inter-Afghan meeting

**JAMEY KEATEN****Associated Press**

**PARIS (AP)** — Afghan officials were meeting Thursday with Taliban rebels and envoys from another Islamist militant group near Paris, looking beyond Afghanistan's insurgency to a future long after international forces have returned home.

French hosts say the secretive, rare meeting among rival Afghans in the town of Chantilly north of Paris over two days isn't expected to involve any horse-trading toward a possible peace and reconciliation deal in a country where long-term plans are overshadowed by the bloody, multifaceted insurgency against the Afghan government and the U.S.-led NATO troops supporting it.

About 20 Afghans from President Hamid Karzai's government, the Taliban, as well as the political opposition and the Islamist Hezb-e-Islami militant group will just try to foster a conversation after 11 years of

war and consider what their country's institutions and civil society will look like after 2020.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Philippe Lalliot said the talks were not intended as a negotiation, but as a way to foster discussion among Afghans. "France believes it is up to Afghans — and Afghans alone — to lead the process of reconciliation, with the support of the United Nations that has a Security Council mandate toward this end."

French officials and organizers declined to identify the exact location or participants, but said the aim was breaking the ice between various factions in Afghanistan.

"They have trouble talking," said Camille Grand, head of the partially state-funded Foundation for Strategic Research think tank, which is hosting the gathering. Six to 10 French experts, including officials from the Foreign and Defense Ministries, were also attending.



French police officers guard the entrance of the Hotel Chateau de la Tour where Afghan officials were meeting with Taliban rebels in Gouvieux, Chantilly, 50 km (31 miles) north of Paris, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012. Afghan officials were meeting Thursday with Taliban rebels and envoys from another Islamist militant group near Paris, looking beyond Afghanistan's insurgency to a future long after international forces have returned home.

(AP Photo/Michel Euler)

"The issue of the violence is in the minds of these people. No one is naive," Grand said in a telephone interview before the conference. "It's not that we're

neglecting the violence, or trying to resolve it ... that's not the issue."

Envoys provisionally expected included Ghairat Baheer, representing his father-in-law, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the head of Hezb-e-Islami, and Karzai's nephew Hekmat Karzai. Shahabudin Delwar, who served as Afghanistan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan under the Taliban regime that was ousted by the U.S.-led invasion in 2001, was also expected to be one of two Taliban representatives,

though it was not immediately clear who was on hand.

French media reported that Pakistan would also be represented. Last week, after meeting with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari in Paris, French President Francois Hollande said France wants to help ease tensions in Afghanistan, and sees Pakistan as key to stabilizing the region.

The meeting is the third in France over the last year or so, but the last two did not come to light publicly until after, said Grand. □

# EXCELSIOR

CASINO

**EXCELSIOR CASINO**, located at Holiday Inn  
The most complete gambling experience!!

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ★ <b>POKER</b>                     | ★ <b>BLACK JACK</b>           |
| ★ <b>DAILY BINGO</b>               | ★ <b>THREE CARD POKER</b>     |
| ★ <b>SPORTSBOOK</b>                | ★ <b>CARIBBEAN STUD POKER</b> |
| ★ <b>THE LATEST GAMES ON SLOTS</b> | ★ <b>ROULETTE</b>             |
|                                    | ★ <b>CRAPS TABLE</b>          |

Lady Luck is waiting for you at **EXCELSIOR CASINO!**  
For more information give us a call (297) 586-7777



**10 TEN DOLLARS**

1 coupon per person per day

**MATCH PLAY**

**EXCELSIOR CASINO**

**GOOD ONLY AT BLACK JACK**

**10 EXCELSIOR CASINO LOCATED IN THE HOLIDAY INN ARUBA**

**10 TEN DOLLARS**

## BENLO CIGARS

Import & Export • We ship all over the world • Tel.: 5863555  
Located in the Arowak Garden, next to Salt & Pepper, Paparazzi and Tango Restaurant.

We are specialized in premium Cuban Cigars.

Opening hours: Mon. - Sat. 8:30am - 11:00pm

Sunday 9:00am - 11:00pm

Depending on purchase, we have discounts starting from 5% up to 20%.

With purchase of \$20 or more 1 FREE CIGAR

Bring this coupon for your free Cuban Cigar!



Renaissance Market Place  
(583-6108)

Paseo Herencia Mall  
(586-2113)

Express, Sta. Cruz  
(585-8536)

Personalized Service Always close to you!

Maggy's  
Full Service Salons  
Your Beauty Emporium Since 1955

ALFAPARF  
MILANO

KÉRASTASE  
PARIS

PHYTO  
ÉCOLOGIE DES CHEVRES

O·P·I

## New tensions grip Egypt over top prosecutor

**CAIRO (AP)** — Egypt's top prosecutor retracted his resignation on Thursday, a decision that could cause a new uproar in the country after he was accused of pressuring a judge not to release protesters opposed to the Islamist president.

The prosecutor, Talaat Abdullah, who was appointed by President Mohammed Morsi, told reporters he resigned on Monday "under pressure" and amid "abnormal circumstances" with prosecutors holding a sit-in in front of his office.

The protesting prosecutors accused Abdullah of pressuring a judge not to release some 130 anti-Morsi protesters taken into custody earlier this month. The judge had been investigating the Dec. 5 clashes between members of Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood group and anti-Morsi protesters — one of the tensest moments Egypt has seen in recent weeks. At least 10 died in clashes that day.

Morsi alleged that some of those detained during the



Islamists chant slogans supporting President Mohammed Morsi in front of the Supreme Constitutional Court in Cairo, Egypt, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012. (AP Photo/Amr Nabil)

clashes had confessed they were paid to attack his supporters, a charge the investigating judge refuted.

Abdullah's appointment was part of Morsi's highly controversial Nov. 22 decrees, under which he gave himself immunity from judicial oversight. The

decree was aimed at preventing the courts from disbanding the Islamist-dominated assembly drafting Egypt's new constitution, which is now being voted on in the referendum.

Morsi eventually rescinded the decrees, but only after the constituent assembly rushed in a marathon

session to finalize the draft constitution. They did do despite the withdrawals of liberal representatives and Christians from the panel protesting clauses and articles they claim will turn Egypt into an Islamist state. The decisions plunged the country into turmoil, split political forces into two camps — Islamists and their opponents — and sparked

street protests by hundreds of thousands of the opposition and members of judiciary.

The crisis intensified when Morsi put the draft constitution to a vote, despite protests.

The opposition, united under the National Salvation Front umbrella group, called for a "no" vote.

The first round drew an unexpectedly low turnout of about 32 percent and was boycotted by most judges who traditionally monitor the voting.

Rights groups said there were numerous violations. Unofficial results from the first of two votes showed that 56 percent voted "yes" for the constitution. The second round of voting is set for Saturday.

In another development, an Egyptian court ordered the retrial of two policemen sentenced to seven years in prison in the killing of Khaled Said, the young man whose death helped ignite last year's uprising that ousted longtime authoritarian ruler Hosni Mubarak. □

## 4 killed in clashes in Benghazi

**ESAM MOHAMED**

**TRIPOLI, Libya (AP)** — Four people were killed Thursday when a protest outside a base for security forces in eastern Libya turned violent less than a week after suspected Islamic militants killed four policemen at the same compound.

A police official in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi said protesters and suspected Islamic militants had gathered outside the compound to demand the release of a man being held in connection with the assassination last month of the head of one of the city's security agencies, National Security Chief Col. Farag el-

Dersi.

Some in the crowd opened fire on the compound during the protest and clashed with police, the security official said. Assaults then launched a rocket-propelled grenade on a military vehicle that was sent to the scene. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

The official said two civilians, a suspected Islamic militant and police officer were killed. Nine people were wounded, including the head of a powerful militia aligned with the military. In Benghazi, where the revolt that unseated

longtime ruler Moammar Gadhafi began last year, security has sharply deteriorated over the past year. An attack in September on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi killed U.S. ambassador to Libya Chris Stevens and three other Americans.

Thursday's attack takes place just four days after four policemen were shot dead when militants attacked the same security compound. The unknown assailants attacked the security compound in an apparent attempt to break into a nearby detention center where the suspect in el-Dersi's killing is being held. □

**Gasparito**  
RESTAURANT - ART GALLERY

**Authentic Aruban Cuisine...**

Valid only for December 2012  
Bring this Coupon and you get this promotion

**3 Course Local Menu**  
Appetizer, Entree and Dessert  
Fish Soup or Salad  
Ice Cream, Quesillo or Chocolate Cake  
Choice include our specialties:  
Aruban Combo, Cabrito Stoba,  
Fisherman's Loot, Ribs, Gasparito Chicken.

Gasparito #3 • Noord, Aruba  
Tel: (297) 586-7144 / 586-7044

**\$21.95** p/p.

Don't forget about our early bird special from 5:30 to 6:30



**BEST SHOPPING**

# TOURIST GO FLEA MARKET

**Largest Flea Market L.G. Smith Blvd. Apposite Container Harbor - Orange Flags**

Aruba Arts and Crafts • Souvenirs • Silver • Largest fashion in Jewelry, Bags, Sandals, Clothing, Blouses, Wallets, T-shirts I Love Aruba, Cigars, Caps, Hats, Woodcraft, new DVD available Hand paintings, over 100.000 articles

**TELL AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS!**

Transportation: Constant public busses, tours, taxi's with your own car stay a few hours. Food and cool drinks, delicious B.B.Q. and drinks. Be smart do what locals do, best shopping lowest Flea Market Prices. Information: Something to sell, we have open tents.

OPEN SAT. & SUN. 8AM - 6PM  
**CALL BETO 592-2424**

## Iraq finance minister says staff members kidnapped

**ADAM SCHRECK**  
**Associated Press**

**BAGHDAD (AP)** — Iraq's finance minister on Thursday accused a "militia force" of kidnapping members of his staff and said he holds the prime minister personally responsible for their safety. Finance Minister Rafia al-Issawi leveled the charges just hours after Iraq's ailing president was flown to Germany for medical treatment following a stroke. The 79-year-old president, Jalal Talabani, is widely seen as a unifying figure who is able to rise above Iraq's often bitter politics and mediate among the country's ethnic and sectarian groups. Al-Issawi made the accusations in a late night press conference, where he called on parliament to hold a vote of no confidence against Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Shiite-led government. The move is certain to inflame Iraq's simmering political tensions, which have been heightened since an arrest warrant was issued

against one of al-Issawi's political allies a year ago. Political rhetoric is heating up ahead of provincial elections scheduled for April.

Al-Issawi is a member of the Sunni-backed Iraqiya bloc,

year branded al-Maliki a dictator in a TV interview. Al-Issawi blasted al-Maliki's government as one "that does not respect its institutions and sovereignty and that cannot live without crisis."



People enter the main entrance of the Charite Virchow hospital in Berlin, Germany, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012. Iraqi President Jalal Talabani arrived in Germany on Thursday and was transferred to the hospital for further medical treatment after suffering a stroke. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn)

al-Maliki's main political rival. He was flanked during the televised address by senior members of the bloc, including the parliament speaker, Osama al-Nujaifi, and Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlaq, who last

While he emphasized that he believes the detentions were carried out by militia members rather than state security forces, he suggested that the prime minister had knowledge of the move against his staff. □

## Putin: Russia recognizes need for change in Syria

**V. ISACHENKOV**  
**Associated Press**

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Russian President Vladimir Putin distanced himself further than ever before from his longtime ally in Syria on Thursday, saying he understands Syria needs change and that he is not protecting its president. Putin, however, warned that efforts to unseat Bashar Assad could plunge Syria even deeper into violence. He insisted that Russia has not changed its stance and believes that only a negotiated settlement can end the civil war. Putin's assessment came a week after Russia's top envoy for Syria was quoted as saying Assad's forces were losing control of the country. Although the Foreign Ministry backpedaled on that statement, analysts have suggested for months that the Kremlin is resigned to Assad's fall. Russia has blocked international attempts to step up pressure on the Assad regime, leading to accusations that it is supporting Assad.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has long stated that Russia is not propping up Assad, as did Putin in strong words on Thursday.

"We are not preoccupied that much with the fate of the Assad regime; we realize what's going on there and that the family has been in power for 40 years," Putin said during his annual hours-long news conference. "Undoubtedly, there is a call for changes."

"We are worried about another thing: what happens next," he said. "We don't want to see the opposition come to power and start fighting the government that becomes the opposition, so that it goes on forever." Fyodor Lukyanov, the editor of the Russia in Global Affairs journal, said Moscow's stance has been consistent and Putin's statements do not signal a change. "Russia has always said it did not support Assad personally, that it wanted a political dialogue" between Assad's government and the opposition, Lukyanov said. □

# NEED CASH TODAY?

## PAWN OR SELL YOUR GOLD



### VISIT US & COMPARE FOR YOURSELF!



## JUWELENHUISJE

OPEN 10AM - 6PM MONDAY - FRIDAY



ORANJESTAD WERFSTRAAT 7 LOK. 12 TEL 588 4141 ☎ SAN NICOLAS B. V/D VEEN ZEPPENFELDSTRAAT 14 TEL 584 4141



# Nicaragua: 18 Mexicans guilty of money laundering

LUIS GALEANO

MANAGUA, Nicaragua

(AP) — A Nicaraguan judge on Wednesday found 18 Mexicans detained while transporting \$9.2 million in cash in the Central American country guilty of drug trafficking, money laundering and organized crime. The group was detained in August near Nicaragua's border with Honduras while traveling in six vans with logos like those used by Mexican television giant Televisa. The bundles of cash had been stashed in compartments inside the vehicles.

Judge Edgard Altamirano said evidence showed the 17 men and one woman were members of organized crime.

"The way they stashed the cash in the vehicles with the Televisa logos, the large amount of money, that's the typical way members of organized crime act," Altamirano said.

The detainees told authorities at the time they were members of a Televisa news crew that had traveled to Nicaragua to cover



Escorted by police officers, alleged members of an organized crime group, among them the Mexican citizen Raquel Alatorre Correa, second from left, arrive to a court to attend their trial in Managua, Nicaragua, Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2012. (AP Photo/Esteban Felix)

the trial of suspects linked to the 2011 killing of Argentine folk singer Facundo Cabral.

Authorities haven't said whether the group, which was led by Raquel Alatorre, was working for a drug cartel. Several were identified as employees of private security firms in Tamaulipas, the northern Mexico border state that is home to the Zetas and Gulf cartels.

Before Altamirano issued his verdict, he allowed the

defendants to speak.

Only eight of the defendants, looking distraught, spoke and asked the judge for a "fair decision" and said they were not guilty. They also apologized to Nicaragua and Mexico for any inconvenience their case caused.

Alatorre spoke first and asked that she be transferred from a prison in the capital to a women's prison in southwest Nicaragua. Alatorre's attorney, Ricardo

Ramirez Magnali, said the prosecution didn't prove its case but he wouldn't say whether his client plans to appeal the verdict.

"The prosecution did not prove that the defendants came to alter our Nicaraguan financial system with money laundering," Ramirez Magnali said.

Prosecutors said it was Alatorre who processed the group's migration permits, and arranged for lodging and food. They said she had crossed into Nicaragua several times since 2008. They said she entered and exited Nicaragua 22

times between 2010 and 2011.

Nicaraguan authorities said the elaborate ruse was intended to smuggle the cash through Nicaragua to the neighboring nation of Costa Rica to the south.

Mexican drug cartels frequently buy Colombian cocaine to ship north to the U.S. market, and often must smuggle cash back south to pay the Colombia suppliers.

Prosecutors requested the maximum sentence of 30 years. Altamirano set the sentencing date for Jan. 18. □

## Venezuela:

## Court could decide on Chavez swearing-in

FABIOLA SANCHEZ

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)

— The president of Venezuela's Supreme Court said Thursday that it could decide whether it's constitutional to postpone the date of ailing President Hugo Chavez's swearing-in as he recovers from cancer surgery in Cuba.

Supreme Court President Luisa Estella Morales also said the matter has not yet been brought before the court. Chavez is due to be sworn in for another six-year term on Jan. 10, but complications after his Dec. 11 surgery and his silence after the procedure have thrown into doubt whether he will be capable of taking the oath of office.

"At this time, there is no constitutional question to resolve," Morales said at a news conference. "When the matter is brought up,

if it's brought up, then it will be the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice that will decide."

The justice's remarks came after National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello suggested on Tuesday that Chavez's inauguration could be postponed — a statement that has fed uncertainty about the his prospects of recovery.

Cabello defended the idea in a message Thursday on his Twitter account, saying: "I only expressed my opinion, of which I'm absolutely convinced since it's in line with our constitution."

His stance conflicted with that of Vice President Nicolas Maduro, Chavez's chosen successor, who on Wednesday said he didn't want to speculate about such a scenario and that the Supreme Court could settle any such question if

needed.

Venezuela's Constitution says the president should be sworn in on Jan. 10 before the National Assembly. Maduro said in a televised speech Thursday that Chavez is conscious and progressively recovering. He also said Chavez has been with his family resting while receiving treatment for a respiratory infection.

"He's well. He's conscious," Maduro said during the speech in central Guarico state. "He's fighting a great battle ... for his life, for his health." Maduro reiterated that the president had undergone a complicated surgery. In addition to the infection, the 58-year-old Chavez also suffered bleeding during the operation, which the government said was promptly stanching. It was his fourth cancer-related operation since June 2011. □

Come Join the Fun

**Super Weekend**

*Winners' Circle Card: It's FREE!*

**Friday**

Double points on slots from 12noon to 6pm

"HAPPY HOUR" RAFFLES at 9, 10 & 11

**Saturday**

BINGO 1pm

8 games + one progressive game, door prizes, drinks & snacks!

\$6 for 4 cards / Avg. 2 for the progressive!

Double points on slots from 4pm to 6pm

**Sunday**

BINGO 1pm

8 games + one progressive game, door prizes, drinks & snacks!

\$6 for 4 cards / Avg. 2 for the progressive!

**LADIES NIGHT**

starting 6pm, first 100 ladies receive \$15 free play!

Double points on slots from 4pm to 6pm

**Daily**

NEW IMPROVED POKER TOURNAMENTS

- Live Poker action every day from 6pm to 4am
- Ongoing Poker "Bad Beat", Early Bird & Cash-Back promotions
- Earn points on Cash Games

The Casino at the Radisson.  
Open daily from 12noon to 4am.  
Saturday & Sunday 11am to 4am.  
For information call +297 586-4045

**Radisson**  
ARUBA  
RESORT, CASINO & SPA





# Miss Universe: Language barrier took spotlight

**MICHELLE RINDELS**

**Associated Press**

**LAS VEGAS (AP)** — Miss Venezuela came in third in the Miss Universe contest, a disappointment for the South American nation that has won more crowns in the pageant than any other country besides the U.S.

But Irene Sofia Esser Quintero was the talk of the Internet on Thursday after she attempted to answer a question in English during the pageant's finals. Her answer was unintelligible at times — one of several examples where the language barrier came to the forefront during the pageant.

## MISS VENEZUELA INTERVIEW

Pageant officials provided a professional translator so top-five Miss Venezuela could understand her on-stage interview question: "If you could change one law, what would it be and why?"

Esser was allowed to answer in her native Spanish, but stepped out of her comfort zone and tried her English with this response:

"I think that any leys (laws) there are in Constitution or in life, are already made. I think that we should have, uh, a straight way to go in our similar, or, eh, in our lives as is this. For example, I'm a surfer, and I think that the best wave that I can take is the wave that I wait for it. So please do our only, eh, law that we can do. Thank you, Vegas!"

Bloggers and observers on Twitter seized on the bru-



Miss Venezuela, Irene Sofia Esser Quintero, takes center stage as she is named as one of the 10 finalists during the Miss Universe pageant, Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2012, in Las Vegas. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

nette beauty's comment, with some lampooning her English and calling the answer nonsensical. Others defended her as brave for trying a second language under the glare of the spotlight.

Back home in pageant-crazy Venezuela, which has produced six past titleholders and numerous finalists, her loss was front-page news. An article in the newspaper *El Nacional*, noted Esser looked quite good, "but an unintelligible answer in the round of questions lost her the crown." Because the pageant doesn't release scores publicly, there's no way to determine how the answer affected the outcome.

The newspaper also referred readers to an online poll asking whether they liked Esser's response. About 90 percent of those who answered, many of them in Venezuela, said "no."

## SHYING AWAY FROM ENGLISH

While Esser stepped out with English, other finalists shied away from the pageant's lingua franca. In videotaped interviews aired during the telecast, top 10 candidates Miss Mexico and Miss France opted to talk about themselves in Spanish and French, respectively. In the live interview, top-five contestant Miss Brazil took her question — about whether bikinis turn women into sex symbols — in Portuguese, and gave her answer in Portuguese. She finished fifth.

The pageant has no language requirement. Pageant spokeswoman Brenda Mendoza said organizers are proud their contestants come from around the globe, and have translators on hand to facilitate interviews for non-English speakers.

## FACING IT HEAD-ON

Miss Philippines Janine Tugonon addressed the topic directly in the on-stage interview. When asked whether English should be a prerequisite for Miss Universe because she's an international ambassador, Tugonon gave this reply in her own, slightly accented English:

"For me, being Miss Universe is not just about knowing how to speak a specific language. It's being able to influence and inspire other people. So whatever language you have, as long as your heart is to serve and you have a strong mind to — to show to people, then you can be Miss Universe." She got loud applause and cheers in reply.

## PAST WINNER

Last year's winner, Angolan beauty queen Leila Lopes, spoke in deliberate English, perhaps refined by Miss Universe appearances and business management studies in England. Her road to the Miss Universe crown last year in Sao Paulo involved winning over the crowd by speaking in Portuguese, their shared language. Angola, like Brazil, is a former Portuguese colony. □





## “Divi Resorts Winter Wonderland Christmas Celebration”



**ORANJESTAD** - The chain of Hotels of the Divi Resorts: Divi, Tamarijn, Divi/Dutch Village, Divi Golf, Divi Phoenix, Phoenix Sales, Dal Time and Divi Aruba Sales Consultants celebrated their wonderful Christmas Party last Sunday at the Renaissance Convention Center.

Divi Resorts has over 1000 employees in the tourism sector and surely wanted to demonstrate their appreciation and thank them for their good work during the entire year. The success of the companies is thank you to the service and friendliness of the employees. More than

1000 people enjoyed the entire evening.

The theme for the party was “Winter Wonderland” and during this night nominees for Employee and Supervisor of the Year 2012 were honored.

Congratulations to all the nominees and the winners in the different categories!

Thank you to the Human Resources Department for organizing this wonderful event.

A special thanks to the following people who contributed to the party: Larissa Leeuwe and Mishelle Mota as the Ice Princesses, Gigliola Go-

mez for designing and Alicia Barros for making the gorgeous dresses of the Ice Princesses, Andrew Curiel and his team for the artistic hair & make-up of the ice princesses, Tsunami for their wonderful performance during the whole night and Mr. Berkemeyer for his beautiful crystal creations that were awarded to the winners that night.

On behalf of the Management and staff of the Divi Resorts we wanted to wish all employees and the community of Aruba a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! □



# Go Karting in Aruba with Bushiri Karting Speedway!

**EAGLE** - Do you feel the need for speed in Aruba? You have to visit Bushiri Karting Speedway for the thrill of your life on a professional outdoor karting track driving in high speed rental go karts! Have fun on your vacation with your friends & family, enjoy a good race, get your lap time results, and after the race enjoy some good food and cold drinks at our Sports Bar. Bushiri Karting Speedway & Fuel Sports Bar & Grill is open daily from 10am – 6:30 pm. Great fun with friends and family at an affordable price, no reservations needed, just arrive and drive any time of day. We have a total of 13 Rental Karts, 7 Adult Karts of 270cc 9 Horse Power Honda Engine that can reach up to 50 mph on our 0.8 professional Outdoor Track. We also have 6 Junior Karts of 160cc 6 Horse Power. Honda Engine with Adjustable Seats & Paddles, age for riding the junior karts is 7 till 12 years and for the adult karts is 13 years & up. We will see you here at Bushiri Karting Speedway & Fuel Sports Bar & Grill, the place for Racing & Fun here in Aruba! ☐



## Wedding bells at Divi!



**EAGLE BEACH** – Weddings are one of the most significant moments in our lives, and for a few lucky brides and grooms, this monumental occasion was combined with a once-in-a-lifetime— date:12/12/12. In fact, numerically matching month-day-year combinations are no more, at least for this century. Divi Resorts here in Aruba hosted several 12/12/12 weddings along Aruba's shores, including two held on picturesque, pristine Eagle Beach. Erin Ambrose and Christopher J. Dupuis Jr., both from Bellingham, Massachusetts, were joined by close to 30 family and friends who traveled to Aruba and stayed at the Divi All-Inclusive Resort for this dream destination wedding. Held at 5:30pm, the couple said their "I do's" just in time to share in a champagne toast with guests with the setting sun as their backdrop. Following, a toes-in-the-sand barbecue feast, with authentic island steel pan music, was held at Divi's Sandpiper Beach Bar. A little further down Eagle Beach, Kristina Sebesi and Rex Lu from Canada were under a gorgeous bamboo arch, artfully decorated by local Koolman's Flower Shop, sharing their special moment with an intimate group of 20 family and friends. And for any potential grooms who missed the opportunity to have that wedding anniversary date that is easy to remember (that's right, no excuses that you "forgot" your anniversary!), next year offers the memorable date of 11/12/13. ☐

## Beauty On The Beach

## Tendresse Fritsch

She is from Hengelo, Holland. This is her first time in Aruba, she is staying with locals for one month. She loves the Beach.

WINNER OF TRIP ADVISOR'S  
CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE 2012

### The Blue Lobster

Best Lobster House and International  
Cuisine's Restaurant in Aruba  
For reservation: 586-3843



# RENAISSANCE MALL



## OPEN THIS SUNDAY

## 10 am - 2 pm



Adolfo Dominguez - Aldo - Aruba Aloe Store - Atlantis Adventures - BCBG Maxazria  
Bulgari - Calvin Klein - Carolina Herrera - Cartier - Chopard - Cigar Emporium - Ci Gusta - Coach  
CocoSol - Colombian Emeralds International - Crocs - Custo Barcelona - David Yurman - Diesel  
Dufry - Entre Nous - Epk - Ermenegildo Zegna - Eva Boutique - Façonnable - Furla - Gandelman  
Gucci - Guess - Guess Kids - Hilfiger Denim - Jewelers Warehouse - Kenneth Cole  
Lacoste - La Martina - Longchamp - Louis Vuitton - Michael Kors - Monalisa - Pier Minimarket  
Ralph Lauren - Rolex - Starbucks - Sun Specs - Tag Heuer - Vilebrequin - Yves Rocher

Located at the Renaissance Resort  
Oranjestad, City Center

**R**  
RENAISSANCE<sup>™</sup>  
MALL



# Aruba say's "Masha Danki"!



Recently a group of Loyal Visitors of Aruba were honored as Distinguished Visitors. The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba between 10-and-20 consecutive years. All the honorees are members of Divi Village and

have been enjoying the island every year. The honorees were Ricky Darden and Jim Yarborough, residents of Franklin, Virginia, and Normand and Sharon Blais, residents of South Attleboro, Massachusetts. The certificate was presented by Darline S. de Cuba, representing Aruba Tourism

Authority, together with Hilda Mills and Gloria Defoe, who helped conduct the ceremony held at Divi Village. Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were the Fantastic Sunsets, Beautiful Blue Ocean, Friendly Aruban Hospitality and the Local Restaurants. □



## Aruba's newly expanded iStore open for business!

**ORANJESTAD** – The construction for the expanded new iStore in Ponton is done, and the facility opened this week on Wednesday. The beautifully designed concept store by Croes Architecture Studio N.V., is the home of the local Apple Authorized Reseller, who is now officially an Apple Specialist and an Apple Authorized Service Provider. Owner Milo J. Croes and his crew of Apple professionals, run the friendly operation, at the same address as the original iStore, Ponton 67B, unit 5. The new space is almost four times bigger, and spreads over two floors, carrying the complete Apple product line, including desktops, portables, laptops,

iPods, iPads and accessories. The store boasts a Genius Bar, an inventory room, and an educational center where clients may learn how to use the technology, and familiarize themselves with its amazing range of capabilities.

The high-tech looking store with simple architecture, large glass panes and skylights, is a reflection's of the Apple philosophy marrying function with contemporary aesthetics. Equipped with a state of the art security system, and graced with ample parking, the store will be expecting clients 9am to 6pm, and in December, the iStore will be open on Sunday from 10am to 12noon. The new store was originally announced at an Apple Summit in the Dominican Republic, when Milo J. Croes was invited to that special gathering joining 27 of Apple's regional partners. Croes shares that as Aruba's Apple Outright Service Provider he was selected to attend the Apple Specialist Program and took advantage of the important meeting to surprise his colleagues with the great news from Aruba. Apple fans and die-hards can't wait to see the new selection of ingenious Apple designed and created iPods, Mac laptops and desktop computers, the OS X operating system and Mountain Lion available as well as the revolutionary New iPad. Other high-end brands will also be available including Beats by Dr Dre, Belkin Electronics, Griffin Technology, and Harman Kardon designed to please music lovers. The iStore interviewed over 30 candidates for employment, out of which ten were chosen all technology savvy kids, ages 15 to 19, who will be helping clients at the store with their purchases and set-ups. □

**cOndominium**  
eagle beach

*the perfect beach is Only the beginning*

selling now...  
**20**  
exclusive condominiums

J.E. Irausquin Blvd. 224  
Oranjestad • Aruba  
**297.587-5300**  
**297.732-0000**  
sales@o-eaglebeacharuba.com  
www.o-eaglebeacharuba.com



# NHL cancels all games through Jan. 14

In this photo taken Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012, a hockey goal sits on the ice at Joe Louis Arena home of the Detroit Red Wings hockey club in Detroit.

Associated Press  
Page 21



In this Feb. 27, 1999, file photo, Suzy Hamilton reacts after winning the women's 1,500 meter run with a time of 4:13.96 at the USA Championships athletics meet in Atlanta. Associated Press

## Former Olympian says she has worked as escort

EDDIE PELLIS

AP National Writer

Three-time Olympian Suzy Favor Hamilton says she coped with depression and a troubled marriage by turning to a life of prostitution.

In a series of posts to her Twitter account, Favor Hamilton acknowledged working as an escort following a report Thursday on The Smoking Gun website about her double life.

"I do not expect people to understand," Favor Hamilton tweeted. "But the reasons for doing this made sense to me at the time and were very much related to depression."

Continued on Page 18

## AP MALE ATHLETE OF YEAR



In this Aug. 4, 2012, file photo, Michael Phelps, of the United States, poses with his gold medal in the men's 4x100-meter medley swimming relay at the Aquatics Centre in the Olympic Park during the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

Associated Press  
Page 20



**GRAND VICTORIA BAR & RESTAURANT**  
SPECIALIZE IN CHINESE AND INTERNATIONAL CUISINE



Located at the Palm Beach #184 near the traffic lights opposite the high-rise hotel, walking distance from the hotels. We have the best prices on all of our cuisines. **Call: 586-4481**

**UNICASA SUPERMARKET**



**unicasa**  
Palm Beach #184 • Tel: (297) 586-8540  
Open hours: Monday - Saturday 8am - 12midnight  
Saturday 8am - 10pm

Has everything that you need for a good vacation. We have a wide variety of liquors and wine, beach items and much more.



# NHL cancels all games through Jan. 14



In this file photo taken Sept. 17, 2012, the NHL logo is seen on a goal at a Nashville Predators practice rink in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

IRA PODELL

AP Sports Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The NHL could be one step away from canceling another hockey season because of

a labor fight with the players.

In the latest round of cancellations, the NHL on Thursday wiped out all games through Jan. 14. More than

50 percent of the schedule has been lost, and the rest is now in great danger, too.

"I don't want to characterize what today's cancellations mean or don't mean," NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly told The Associated Press in an email. "I will stand on the announcement that was made."

So far, 625 regular-season games have been called off, including nearly 100 in the announcement made Thursday — the 96th day of the NHL's lockout. The New Year's Day Winter Classic and the All-Star game also have been lost.

The NHL had previously canceled games through Dec. 30.

Daly said in a radio interview Wednesday that mid-January is likely the latest the sides could go to make a deal to save the season. When pressed, however, he said he expects the season will be played.

No drop-dead date has been announced by the NHL, which is the only North American professional sports league to cancel a season because of to a labor dispute. The 2004-05 season was lost to a lockout.

Daly said the sides hadn't been in contact with each other Thursday, and no new talks are planned.

The groups have remained apart since two days of meetings with a federal mediator last week produced no progress. There haven't been negotiations since Dec. 6 in New York, when talks broke down after a few days of bargaining.

Since the sides split last week, there has been limited contact — phone calls and a brief email exchange. The NHL believes negotiations should resume only when there is something new to say.

"I don't think either party is refusing a meeting," Daly said Wednesday. "But unless there is an indication one side or the other is prepared to move or has a new idea to move the process forward — and so far neither side has indicated — I am not sure what we would do at the meeting."

"What is the agenda? Who is directing the conversation? We don't have anything new to say right now." Union executive director Donald Fehr said Wednesday he was glad to hear Daly's belief that there would be a season, and added he hopes Daly is right.

"Hopefully, we'll get back together and negotiate out the remaining issues as soon as possible," Fehr said. "(We aren't talking) because the owners have not indicated a desire to resume."

"We've indicated any number of times that we're willing to resume when they are (and) we're willing to resume without preconditions. So we're waiting to hear back from them." □

## Former Olympian

Continued on Page 17

The Smoking Gun said the 44-year-old athlete has been working for the last year for a Las Vegas escort service that booked her for dates there, as well as in Los Angeles, Houston and Chicago. The website said she charged \$600 an hour for her services.

One of the country's best-ever middle-distance runners, Favor Hamilton competed for the U.S. at the Olympics in 1992, 1996 and 2000 but did not win a medal. She won seven U.S. national titles. She lives in Madison, Wis., where, The Smoking Gun reported, she and her husband, Mark, live in a \$600,000 home and appear to be in no financial distress based on the website's review of court and municipal records.

Favor Hamilton told the website that only her husband was aware of her escort work, but that, "He tried, he tried to get me to stop. He wasn't supportive of this at all."

The website reported that Favor Hamilton worked under the alias "Kelly Lundy" but said she told some of her clients about her true identity and suspected one of them leaked her identity. Soon after the story appeared online, Favor Hamilton released a series of tweets saying in part that she was "drawn to escorting in large part because it provided many coping mechanisms for me when I was going through a very challenging time with my marriage and my life."

A nine-time NCAA champion for Wisconsin, Favor Hamilton is the namesake of the Big Ten's Suzy Favor Athlete of the Year Award, given to the conference's top female athlete.

Neither Favor Hamilton nor officials from the Big Ten immediately responded to requests from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Prostitution is legal in most rural counties in Nevada, but is illegal in Las Vegas and Reno. A Las Vegas police spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a message about whether the department was investigating.



In this photo taken July 17, 2012 Suzy Favor Hamilton poses for a portrait at her home in Shorewood Hills a suburb of Madison, Wis.

Associated Press

Telephone numbers for the escort service Hamilton said she worked for were not in service and attempts to reach a company representative by email were not immediately successful.

Favor Hamilton is a three-time outdoor 1,500-meter national champion and a three-time indoor national champion — her last title coming in 1999.

"As crazy as I know it seems, I never thought I would be exposed, therefore never hurting anybody," she said in one Twitter post.

In another, she says she is seeking psychological care for her problem.

She closes her series of tweets by saying, "I fully intend to make amends and get back to being a good mother, wife, daughter, and friend." □



**South Beach**  
The Best Entertainment Place  
On The Island  
WEEKEND AND HOLIDAYS From 5:00pm - 3:00am  
DURING THE WEEK 5:00pm - 1:00am

**Authentic Lebanese and Asian Food**

*Yalla Yalla*

Middle Eastern Food

FOR THE ORIGINAL SUSHI HERE IN ARUBA

**HOUSE OF JAPAN**

THE BEST SUSHI PLACE

ALL LOCATED AT THE SOUTH BEACH CENTRE  
Sunday thru Thursday from 5:00pm - 12:30am  
Friday and Saturday from 5:00pm - 2:00am

**Segafredo**

PRESENT THIS AD RECEIVE \$10 DISCOUNT ON FOOD

## NBA Capsules

# Melo returns, scores 31 as Knicks rout Nets 100-86

### Associated Press

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Carmelo Anthony scored 31 points in his return to the lineup and the New York Knicks beat the Brooklyn Nets 100-86 on Wednesday night in the third meeting this season between the city rivals.

After two tight games in Brooklyn, the Knicks turned the first one at Madison Square Garden into a rout by dominating the second half. Anthony, who missed two games with a sprained left ankle, moved fine and shot well, though his scoring average against the Nets this season actually dropped to 37 points per game.

J.R. Smith added 19 points and Tyson Chandler had 16 points and 12 rebounds for the Knicks, who bounced back from their first home loss Monday against Houston, improving to 11-1 at MSG.

Joe Johnson scored 17 points for the Nets, who have lost three straight and eight of 10. What once was a deadlock for the Atlantic Division lead after the first meeting is now a six-game advantage for the Knicks. Deron Williams and Brook Lopez each had 16 points for Brooklyn.

**THUNDER 100, HAWKS 92**  
**ATLANTA (AP)** — Kevin Durant set a season high with 41 points and had 13 rebounds as Oklahoma City held off Atlanta for its 12th straight win.

Russell Westbrook added 27 points — 21 in the first half — and 11 assists for the Thunder.

The Thunder (21-4) improved the NBA's best record and atoned for a 104-95 home loss to the Hawks on Nov. 4. Oklahoma City is 20-2 since that loss.

The 12 straight wins matches the longest streak for the franchise since 1996, when it had a 14-game winning streak as the Seattle SuperSonics.

Jeff Teague scored 19 points to lead the Hawks. **CLIPPERS 93, HORNETS 77**  
**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Blake Griffin scored 18 points and Los Angeles beat New Orleans for its franchise record-tying 11th consecutive victory.

Jamal Crawford added 17 points, DeAndre Jordan scored 12, and Chris Paul had 10 points and 12 assists, surpassing 5,000 in his career for the Clippers. They tied the franchise record set by the 1974-75 Buffalo Braves.

Robin Lopez scored 14 of his 22 points in the first quarter and rookie Anthony Davis added 16 for the Hornets. They lost their ninth in a row and 11th in their last 12 games while falling to 2-10 on the road. They were the last team to beat the Clippers on Nov. 26.

**CELTICS 103, CAVALIERS 91**  
**BOSTON (AP)** — Paul Pierce scored 25 of his season-high 40 points in the second half, hitting 10 of his 11 shots after halftime, and Boston beat Cleveland to snap a three-game skid.

Pierce made his first eight shots coming out of the break, including three 3-pointers. He finished 13 of 16 from the field.

Rajon Rondo added 20 points and eight assists for the Celtics. Jason Terry added 15 points.

Kyrie Irving scored 22 points for the Cavs, who played without Anderson Varejao, the NBA's leading rebounder who sat out with a bruised knee. Rookie Tyler Zeller got his first career start in Vare-

jao's place and scored 20 points as Cleveland fell to 2-14 on the road.

**KINGS 131, WARRIORS 127**  
**SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)** — DeMarcus Cousins scored 24 points, Aaron Brooks added 23 and Sacramento snapped a five-game losing streak with a win over Golden State.

After blowing a 15-point lead, Brooks made a pair of 3-pointers in the final minutes to help the Kings pull away. Both teams shot 50 percent, while the Kings had a season high in points and scored more than any team had against the Warriors this season.

Stephen Curry scored 23 of his 32 points in the second half before fouling out, and David Lee had 29 points and eight rebounds in Golden State's worst defensive outing of the season. Only Oklahoma City had shot at least 50 percent against the Warriors.

**GRIZZLIES 90, BUCKS 80**  
**MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)** — Zach Randolph had 15 points and 17 rebounds,



Boston Celtics forward Paul Pierce (34) makes a move against Cleveland Cavaliers point guard Kyrie Irving (2) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Boston, Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2012. Pierce scored 40 points to lead the Celtics in their 103-91 victory.

Associated Press

and Marc Gasol had 12 points and 12 rebounds to lead Memphis over Milwaukee.

Rudy Gay added 13 points

for Memphis, which won its third straight. Mike Conley had 11 points and six assists, while Marreese Speights scored 10 points. □

WELCOME TO THE NEWEST LOBSTER HOUSE OF ARUBA  
EXPECTACULAR HIGH QUALITY CUISINE  
WARMTH, PERSONALIZED, PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Present this add when seated to claim your discount!  
Discount on main dishes, except 4 dishes.

Up to **30% OFF**  
30% on cash  
10% on creditcard

Valid until **December 31st 2012**

**CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE**  
2012

[www.arubabluelobster.com](http://www.arubabluelobster.com)

**The Blue Lobster**  
INTERNATIONAL CUISINE & LOBSTER HOUSE

**THE BLUE LOBSTER FEATURES:**  
LIVE LOBSTER  
OVER 18 LOBSTER DISHES  
BLACK ANGUS BEEF  
FRESH CATCH OF THE DAY  
INTERNATIONAL DISHES

Open from Monday till Saturday  
For Lunch 11am till 4pm  
For Dinner 5pm till 10 pm.

We are located on Palm beach 164A  
1/2 mile from Wendy's at Noord.

Reservations recommended,  
Please call 586 3843 and or 586 4788  
[info@arubabluelobster.com](mailto:info@arubabluelobster.com)

This promotion is subject to change at any time, and is not valid with other promotions.



# Michael Phelps voted AP male athlete of year

**PAUL NEWBERRY**  
**AP National Writer**

Michael Phelps added one more honor to his staggering list of accomplishments Thursday, being voted The Associated Press male athlete of the year in a poll by U.S. editors and broadcasters. Phelps edged out basketball player LeBron James to win the award for the second time, not only a fitting payoff for another brilliant Olympics (four gold medals and two silvers in swimming at the London Games) but recognition for one of the greatest careers in any sport. "It's kind of nuts to think about everything I've gone through," Phelps said. "I've finally had time to myself, to sit back and say, '... that really happened?' It's kind of shocking at times." Phelps finished with 40 votes in balloting, while James was next with 37. Track star Usain Bolt, who won three gold medals in London, was third with 23. Carl Lewis is the only other Olympic-related star to be named AP male athlete of the year more than once, taking the award for his track and field exploits in 1983 and '84. The only men honored more than twice are golf's Tiger Woods and cyclist Lance Armstrong (four times each), and basketball's Michael Jordan (three times). "Obviously, it's a big accomplishment," Phelps said. "There's so many amazing male athletes all over the world and all over our country. To be able to win this is something that just sort of tops off my career." Phelps retired at age 27 as soon as he finished his final race in London, having won more gold medals (18) and overall medals (22) than any other Olympian. No one else is even close. "That's what I wanted to do," Phelps said. "Now that it's over, it's something I can look back on and say, 'That was a pretty amazing ride.'" The current ride isn't so bad either. Set for life financially, he has turned his fierce com-



In this May 13, 2012, file photo, Michael Phelps poses for a portrait at the Olympic Media Summit in Dallas. Phelps has added another triumph to his list of accomplishments: The Associated Press male athlete of the year, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012.



Miami Heat's LeBron James prepares to dunk against the Minnesota Timberwolves during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Dec. 18, 2012, in Miami. The Heat won 103-92. Associated Press

petitive drive to golf, working on his links game with renowned coach Hank Haney as part of a television series on the Golf Channel. In fact, after being informed of winning the AP award, Phelps called in from the famed El Dorado Golf & Beach Club in Los Cabos, Mexico, where he was heading out with Haney to play a few more holes before nightfall. "I can't really complain," Phelps quipped over the phone. Certainly, he has no complaints about his swimming career, which helped turn

a sport that most Americans only paid attention to every four years into more of a mainstream pursuit. More kids took up swimming. More advertisers jumped on board. More viewers tuned in to watch. While swimming is unlikely to ever match the appeal of football or baseball, it has carved out a nice little niche for itself amid all the other athletic options in the United States — largely due to Phelps' amazing accomplishments and aw-shucks appeal. Just the fact that he won over James shows just how much pull Phelps still has. James had an amazing year by any measure: The league MVP won his first NBA title with the Miami Heat, picking up finals MVP honors along the way, and then starred on the gold medal-winning U.S. basketball team in London. Phelps already had won the AP award in 2008 after his eight gold medals in Beijing, which broke Mark Spitz's record. Phelps got it again with a performance that didn't quite match up to the Great Haul of China, but was amazing in its own right. After the embarrassment

of being photographed taking a hit from a marijuana pipe and questioning whether he still had the desire to go on, Phelps returned with a vengeance as the London Games approached. Never mind that he was already the winningest Olympian ever. Never mind that he could've eclipsed the record for overall medals just by swimming on the relays. He wanted to be one of those rare athletes who went out on top. "That's just who he is," said Bob Bowman, his longtime coach. "He just couldn't live with himself if knew he didn't go out there and give it good shot and really know he's competitive. He doesn't know anything else but to give that kind of effort and have those kind of expectations." Phelps got off to a rocky start in London, finishing fourth in the 400-meter individual medley, blown out of the water by his friend and rival, Ryan Lochte. It was only the second time that Phelps had not at least finished in the top three of an Olympic race, the first coming way back in 2000 when he was fifth in his only event of the Sydney

Games as a 15-year-old. To everyone looking in, Lochte seemed poised to become the new Phelps — while the real Phelps appeared all washed up. But he wasn't going out like that. No way. Phelps rebounded to become the biggest star at the pool, edging Lochte in the 200 IM, contributing to a pair of relay victories, and winning his final individual race, the 100 butterfly. There were two silvers, as well, leaving Phelps with a staggering resume that will be awfully difficult for anyone to eclipse. His 18 golds are twice as many as anyone else in Olympic history. His 22 medals are four clear of Larisa Latynina, a Soviet-era gymnast, and seven more than the next athlete on the list. Heck, if Phelps was a nation, he'd be 58th in the medal standings, just one behind India (population: 1.2 billion). "When I'm flying all over the place, I write a lot in my journal," Phelps said. "I kind of relive all the memories, all the moments I had throughout my career. That's pretty special. I've never done that before. It's amazing when you see it all on paper." Four months into retirement, Phelps has no desire to get back in the pool. Oh, he'll swim every now and then for relaxation, using the water to unwind rather than putting in one of his famously grueling practices. Golf is his passion at the moment, but he's also found time to cheer on his hometown NFL team, the Baltimore Ravens, and start looking around for a racehorse that he and Bowman can buy together. Phelps hasn't turned his back on swimming, either. He's got his name attached to a line of schools that he wants to take worldwide. He's also devoting more time to his foundation, which is dedicated to teaching kids to swim and funding programs that will grow the sport even more. He's already done so much.



# Shiffrin earns 1st World Cup win in Sweden

**OLIVER GRASSMAN ARE, Sweden (AP)** — American teenager Mikaela Shiffrin captured her first World Cup victory on Thursday, putting down a perfect second run to win a night slalom ahead of home favorite Frida Hansdotter. Under the floodlights on Are's Olympia course, the 17-year-old Shiffrin finished with a combined time of 1 minute, 45.36 seconds. "This is huge," Shiffrin said. "I think the best part besides the skiing was the ceremony. It made me cry a little bit when I heard the American anthem." Shiffrin was second after the first run and was given quite a challenge by

overall World Cup leader Tina Maze, who had a blazing second run to take a large lead just before the American was to ski. But Shiffrin kept her composure in a run that was even faster, setting a time that first-run leader Hansdotter couldn't match. Hansdotter was still ahead of the American at the first two intermediate times but wasn't as fast in the final section and finished 0.29 seconds behind for second place. Maze was third, 0.52 behind. Shiffrin became the youngest women's World Cup winner since Lara Gut of Switzerland won a super-G in St. Moritz in 2008,

also at 17. She already had two podium finishes in slalom, but the impressive victory is likely to create even higher expectations on the teenager. And she's not quite sure she's ready for that. "I don't really like the success," she said. "I like to sleep at night and I like to hang around the hotel room with my mom. I'm afraid there might be a little hype with this. But I'll take it. This is what I love to do." Lindsey Vonn skipped the race, having taken a break from the World Cup to fully recover from an intestinal illness. □



Mikaela Shiffrin, of the United States, speeds past a pole on her way to clock the second fastest time during the first run of an alpine ski, women's World Cup slalom, in Are, Sweden, Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012. Associated Press

## Serena Williams expected to play at Brisbane

**BRISBANE, Australia (AP)** — Brisbane International organizers say Serena Williams still plans to compete at the Dec. 30 to Jan. 5 tournament despite minor surgery on her big toes which forced her to withdraw from a Dec. 29 exhibition in Thailand. Brisbane tournament director Cameron Pearson said Thursday he had been assured by Williams' agent that the WTA player of the year will "be fit and ready" for the event at the Queensland Tennis Centre. Williams has been affected by chronic foot problems since treading on glass and badly cutting both feet in 2010. The five-time Australian Open winner played at last year's Brisbane International but pulled out with an ankle injury at the quarterfinals. Later in the year, she won Wimbledon, the U.S. Open and gold in women's singles at the London Olympics. □

## Nowitzki has first practices since knee surgery

**DALLAS (AP)** — Dirk Nowitzki has gone through his first full practice with the Dallas Mavericks since undergoing knee surgery that forced the 11-time NBA All-Star to miss every game so far this season. Following the practice on Wednesday, Nowitzki gave no real timetable on when he might make his season debut, except to say "maybe any time after Christmas." The German star had arthroscopic surgery on his ailing right knee on Oct. 19. It was the first knee surgery for the 7-foot (2.14-meter) forward in his 15th NBA season. Nowitzki said he'll see how his knee reacts after the first day of stopping, pushing off and moving. He said he plans to have a couple of similar practice and will absorb some contact as well before trying to play in a game. □

## YOUR TICKET TO EVERY GAME



Your Local Bar situated at Noord

House Specials \* Local Prices  
**DECEMBER 2012**  
MLB PLAYOFFS / NCAA - Season  
EVERY SUNDAY ALL NFL GAMES  
NBA - SEASON



**Caribbean Cinemas** PALM BEACH PLAZA **Megaplex 8**

THE FIRST THEATER WITH CHILDREN PRICES IN ARUBA

NOW YOU CAN BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE USING **cinemaexpress** AT [CARIBBEANCINEMAS.COM/ARUBA](http://CARIBBEANCINEMAS.COM/ARUBA)

586-0074 **DECEMBER 20 - 24** ENJOY YOUR MOVIE WITH

**NEW THIS WEEK** Tom Cruise Rosamund Pike

**JACK REACHER**

ON TWO SCREENS PG-13

With Spanish Subtitles

Mon - Thurs 3:40 / 5:10 / 6:30 / 8:00 / 9:20  
Fri 3:40 / 5:10 / 6:30 / 8:00 / 9:20 / 10:50  
Sat 2:20 / 3:40 / 5:10 / 6:30 / 8:00 / 9:20 / 10:50  
Sun & Hol 2:20 / 3:40 / 5:10 / 6:30 / 8:00 / 9:20

**NEW THIS WEEK** Naomi Watts Ewan McGregor

**THE IMPOSSIBLE**

PG-13

With Spanish Subtitles

Mon - Thurs 4:20 / 6:50 / 9:20  
Fri 4:20 / 6:50 / 9:20 / 11:50  
Sat 1:50 / 4:20 / 6:50 / 9:20 / 11:50  
Sun & Hol 1:50 / 4:20 / 6:50 / 9:20

Martin Freeman Ian McKellen

**THE HOBBIT**

ON TWO SCREENS PG-13

3D Version

Mon - Thurs 4:00 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 8:50  
Fri 4:00 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 8:50 / 11:10  
Sat 2:00 / 4:00 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 8:50 / 11:10  
Sun & Hol 2:00 / 4:00 / 5:25 / 7:35 / 8:50

Daniel Day-Lewis Sally Field

**LINCOLN**

PG-13

Mon - Thurs 4:20 / 7:30  
Fri 4:20 / 7:30 / 10:40  
Sat 4:20 / 7:30 / 10:40  
Sun & Hol 4:20 / 7:30

Chris Pine Alec Baldwin Fausto Mata Frank Perozo

**RISE OF THE GUARDIANS**

3D Version with Spanish Subtitles PG

Mon - Thurs 4:05 / 6:20 / 8:35  
Fri 4:05 / 6:20 / 8:35 / 10:50  
Sat 1:50 / 4:05 / 6:20 / 8:35 / 10:50  
Sun & Hol 1:50 / 4:05 / 6:20 / 8:35

**FEJO LINDO DE DIA DE NOCHE**

Spanish Version NR

Mon - Thurs 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30  
Fri 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30 / 11:45  
Sat 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30 / 11:45  
Sun & Hol 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30

**STARTING TUESDAY DECEMBER 25**

Billy Cristal Bette Midler Jaime Foxx Leonardo DiCaprio

**PARENTAL GUIDANCE**

**DJANGO UNCHAINED**

PG R



## Study: Solo stars at higher death risk than bands

**JILL LAWLESS**  
**Associated Press**

**LONDON (AP)** — Rock 'n' roll will never die — but it's a hazardous occupation. An academic study published Thursday confirms that rock and pop musicians are more likely to die prematurely than the general population, and finds that solo artists are twice as likely to die young as members of bands. Researchers from Liverpool John Moores University and Britain's Health Department studied 1,489 rock, pop, punk, R&B, rap, electronica and New Age stars who became famous between 1956 and 2006 — from Elvis Presley to the Arctic Mon-

stressful times. "Solo artists, even though they have huge followings, may be relatively isolated," said Bellis, director of the Center for Public Health at Liverpool John Moores University. Music critic John Aizlewood agreed that solo artists receive more attention and adulation — and also more pressure. "And when you are a solo act, irrespective of what they say in interviews, it's an incredibly egotistical thing," he said. "So you tend to be dealing with people who are more emotionally extreme. "They have an ego in the way a drummer or even

may also play a role, he said. The research, which updates a 2007 study by the same team, was published in the online journal BMJ Open. The study suggests the infamous rock 'n' roll lifestyle may not be entirely to blame for rock stars' death risk. The researchers looked for the first time at the role of "adverse childhood experiences" — such as physical or sexual abuse — on stars' later behavior. They found that performers who had had at least one adverse childhood experience were more likely to die from drug and alcohol



In this Feb. 16, 2007 file photo, British singer Amy Winehouse poses for a photograph at a studio in north London, Friday, Feb. 16, 2007. **Associated Press**

keys. They found that 137 of the stars, or 9.2 percent, had died, representing "higher levels of mortality than demographically matched individuals in the general population." The researchers dismissed the "fanciful but unsubstantiated" popular myth that rock stars tend to die at 27 — as Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Kurt Cobain and Amy Winehouse all did. The average age of death was 45.2 years for North American stars and 39.6 for European ones. Solo performers had twice the death risk of members of bands. Lead researcher Mark Bellis speculated that could be because bands provide peer support at

a lead guitarist in a band doesn't." In good news for aging rockers, the study found that, after 25 years of fame, stars' death rates began to return to normal — at least in Europe. A European star still living 36 years after achieving fame faces a similar mortality rate to the European public. But U.S. artists continue to die in greater numbers. Bellis said factors contributing to the difference could include longer careers — and thus longer exposure to rock 'n' roll excess — in the U.S., a huge, populous country with greater opportunities for aging stars to stay on the road. Europe's stronger social safety net and socialized medicine

use or "risk-related causes." "Substance abuse and risk-taking in stars are largely discussed in terms of hedonism, music industry culture, responses to the pressures of fame or even part of the creative process," the researchers said. However, they said, "adverse experiences in early life may leave some predisposed to health-damaging behaviors, with fame and extreme wealth providing greater opportunities to engage in risk-taking." But Ellis Cashmore, a cultural studies professor at Staffordshire University and author of the book "Celebrity/Culture," said it would be wrong to overlook "artistic frustration" as a factor in artistic self-destruction. □

## Risks cited in 3-drug hepatitis treatment

© **The New York Times**

Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc. will add the FDA's most serious warning to the US label of the Cambridge company's best-selling drug, Incivek, following reports that at least two patients died from severe skin reactions after taking it in combination with two other hepatitis C treatments. The so-called black box warning — it is bordered in black — is designed to give more prominence to existing label language and to the way Incivek-related skin rashes should be treated. Vertex urges physicians to halt the three-drug combination and provide urgent medical care when serious skin rashes crop up in Incivek patients, especially irritations that grow worse, cover more than half the body, or are accompanied by fever, diarrhea, or mouth sores. The deaths,

which came when patients continued treatment after an adverse skin reaction, were reported separately Wednesday by Vertex and the FDA. Company executives cited "a small number of fatalities" but wouldn't say how many. Food and Drug Administration officials said there were two known deaths, including a 47-year-old woman in the United States and 69-year-old man in Japan. They also reported 112 nonfatal "adverse events" stemming from two types of skin reaction to the combination treatment. Incivek, the first drug developed solely by Vertex, was approved in 2011 for sale in the United States, where it already had been prescribed to more than 50,000 patients in conjunction with the established hepatitis C treatments peginterferon alfa and ribavirin. □

## Merck: niacin combination drug failed in clinical trials

**KATIE THOMAS**  
© **2012 New York Times**

The drug maker Merck announced Thursday that a combination of niacin and another medicine failed to protect against heart attacks and strokes in a large clinical trial, and that the company will no longer pursue approval of the combination drug in the United States. The trial, which followed more than 25,000 patients over four years, also found a statistically significant increase in the number of patients who suffered serious harms, although the company said those adverse events weren't fatal. The results are likely to further tarnish the reputation of niacin, a drug commonly used to raise the levels of good cholesterol in patients at risk for heart disease but which was found not to be beneficial in a government study last year. Merck's drug, called Tredaptive, combined an extended-release version of niacin with laropirant,

a medicine intended to reduce facial flushing in patients, one of the drug's more inconvenient side effects. Tredaptive is sold in about 40 countries, including some in Europe, but it failed to win U.S. approval. In a statement, Merck said it was recommending that doctors not start new patients on the drug. The company said it would work closely with regulatory agencies "to understand the results and determine next steps." Although the study did not determine that the negative results were because of niacin, the conclusions will probably further call into question whether patients should continue to be prescribed long-acting niacin, which is most commonly sold in the United States as Niaspan, made by Abbott. Last year, a study of more than 3,000 patients by the National Institutes of Health found that Niaspan offered no benefit over the use of statins, which are used to lower bad cholesterol. □



**Papillon**  
RESTAURANT

## French fine dining with Caribbean flair

Open for dinner daily from 5 pm - 11 pm  
Early Bird specials - Exclusive wines - Excellent service

Located at The Village (across from Radisson)

## Twitter offers users scrapbook of past tweets

**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** — Twitter is offering its more than 200 million users a chance to keep a digital scrapbook of all their tweets.

The tool, announced this week, is designed to make it easier for people to review all their activity on Twitter's trend-setting messaging service.

When it's available, the downloading option will appear at the bottom of each user's settings menu.

Twitter, which is based in San Francisco, said it may take a several weeks, or even months, before everyone gets the feature.

After a records request is made, users will receive an email on how to download their personal archive. For Twitter's earliest users, the records date back to 2006 when Twitter started.

Twitter users already have been able to peruse their past tweets by navigat-

ing to their personal profile page. But going that route is more cumbersome because it requires scrolling down a page that can sometimes be slow to display additional tweets.

The company said that users who download their entire histories should find it easier to search for particular tweets and organize the messages — by month, for example. The new tool also should serve as a reminder that a copy of everything people have tweeted still resides on Twitter's computers.

Other widely used services, such as Facebook's popular social network, also have been creating digital portraits of people's lives as more content gets posted on their sites. Facebook gives its more than 1 billion users the option to download everything they have shared on the service. It has become easier this year for Facebook users



to look at their past musings and photos as the service converted people's profiles into a timeline that sorts content by the month it was shared. Path, another social network founded by former Facebook executive Dave Morin, is also trying to position itself as a treasure chest of memories. A new feature released Thursday in an up-

date to Path's mobile app allows users to search their past posts on devices running on Apple and Android software. The content can be quickly retrieved by typ-

ing in their names' friends, a specific event or time of year, or just a phrase encapsulating a vacation highlight, such as "hiking in Kauai." □

## Google launches 'scan and match' music service

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — Google is turning on a "scan and match" service for Google Music users to store copies of their songs online, offering for free what Apple charges \$25 a year for.

The service, which launched Tuesday, cuts uploading time for those who want to save their music libraries online.

It scans a user's computer and gives them online access to the songs it finds, as long as they match the songs on its servers. Otherwise, it will upload songs to a user's online locker.

The service is similar to Apple Inc.'s iTunes Match, which includes online storage for

25,000 songs. Google Inc. allows storage for 20,000 songs and allows users to re-download the songs only at the same quality as they were at previously. Apple upgrades songs to iTunes quality.

Amazon runs a similar matching and uploading service called Cloud Player. It costs \$25 a year for 250,000 songs. A free version is limited to 250 songs. Google is still a fledgling entrant into music sales since debuting its store in November 2011, though it expects to benefit from the hundreds of millions of devices that use its Android operating system on mobile devices.

According to the NPD Group, Apple accounted for 64 percent of U.S. music sales online, followed by Amazon at 16 percent. Google has no more than 5 percent, according to NPD. Other services make up the rest.

Google had sold songs at a discount at the start, but that is less so the case now. For example, it was selling the top-ranked Bruno Mars song "Locked Out of Heaven" for \$1.29 on Wednesday, the same as iTunes, and above the 99 cents on Amazon.

But its album price was lower at \$10.49 versus \$10.99 at both iTunes and Amazon. □

**The Promenade Restaurant**

**Special**

**First Course**  
SEAFOOD PROMENADE  
stuffed and baked to a golden color  
**Escargot a la creme**  
creamy garlic sauce with fresh mushrooms  
GARDEN SALAD BOULANGERE  
dressed with your choice of dressing

**Second Course**  
SOUP OF THE DAY  
home made

**Third Course**  
ROAST TENDERLOIN MEDICI  
a mediterranean speciality  
CHICKEN FLORENTINE  
baked stuffed with creamed spinach  
BROILED PORK MEDALLION  
with a dijon mustard sauce and apple mousse  
BAKED STUFFED GROUPE  
glazed with seafood thermidor

**Early Brid Dinner \$22**  
Only from 5pm - 7pm

**Fourth Course**  
CHOCOLATE MOUSSE  
CHEESE CAKE  
ICE CREAM

\$ 22.00 plus Service Charge  
In combination with coupons will be a surcharge of \$4.00

**FOR RESERVATION** **583-8899**  
L.G. Smith Blvd. 160 near the low rise Hotels



<b>NOW SERVING BREAKFAST</b> <b>BREAKFAST • LUNCH • DINNER</b>		<b>FREE DELIVERY OVER \$40</b> FOR HI AND LOW RISE HOTEL DISTRICT - INCLUDING THE BEACH!	<b>TEL 5863604</b>
<b>ALL YOU CAN EAT PANCAKES</b> <b>\$6.99</b> 	<b>2 EGGS, TOAST</b> <b>\$4.49</b> 		
<b>OPEN DAILY - 8:00 A.M. - 10:00 ISH</b> LOCATED BEHIND SEÑOR FROGS, ACROSS FROM THE RADISSON HOTEL Serving breakfast from 8:00 am til 12:00 noon		<b>5 Burgers Aruba</b> 	
		<b>BURGERS HANDPRESSED / DAILY FRESH CUT FRIES!</b>	

## US economy grew at 3.1% this summer

**M. CRUTSINGER**

**AP Economics Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The U.S. economy grew at an annual rate of 3.1 percent over the summer as exports increased, consumers spent more and state and local governments added to growth for the first time in three years. But the economy is likely slowing in the current quarter.

The Commerce Department's third and final estimate Thursday of growth for the July-September quarter was revised up from its previous estimate of a 2.7 percent annual growth rate.

Growth in the third quarter was more than twice the 1.3 percent growth rate in the April-June quarter. But disruptions from Superstorm Sandy and uncertainty weighing on consumers and businesses from the "fiscal cliff" are likely holding back growth in the October-December quarter. Many analysts predict an annual growth rate of just 1.5 percent for this quarter. Robert Kavcic, an economist at BMO Capital Markets, said the upward revision to third-quarter growth didn't change his view that the U.S. economy is slowing in the current quarter to an annual growth rate below 2 percent. Kavcic said a temporary jump in defense spending and business stockpiling in the July-September period is likely being reversed this quarter. □

## Waiting on cliff compromise, stocks inch up

**CHRISTINA REXRODE**

**AP Business Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The stock market ended higher Thursday after flipping between small gains and losses throughout the morning. Uncertainty about the "fiscal cliff," just days away, was top of mind for many traders.

The Republican-controlled House pushed ahead with a bill aimed at averting the "fiscal cliff," but President Barack Obama has threatened to veto it and Democratic leaders in the Senate vowed to let it die.

Many traders now expect that the Republicans and Democrats won't reach an agreement before Christmas. The political haggling kept markets muted, and trading volume was low.

"Every time someone makes a speech, you get another move in the market," said Ben Fischer, founder and managing director of NFJ Investment Group in Dallas. "Everyone's just tracking it on a very short-term basis."

The Dow Jones industrial average fell as much as 36 points before ending the day higher, rising 59.75 points, or 0.45 percent, to close at 13,311.72. Other indexes followed similar patterns. The Standard & Poor's 500 rose 7.88 to 1,443.69. The Nasdaq composite index rose 6.02 to 3,050.39.

In Washington, the Republicans offered in their "Plan B" to raise taxes on the wealthy, but Democrats complained that it would not address the steep budget cuts that are automati-

cally set to occur for military and domestic agencies.

If the Republicans and Democrats don't work out a compromise before the end of the month, the U.S. could go over the "fiscal cliff," a reference to big tax increases and government spend-

promise will be reached, Fischer and others said, evidenced by its more-or-less steady increase since mid-November.

A compromise "doesn't make everything better," said Tim Biggam, market strategist with the broker-

like the European debt crisis, still need to be resolved, he said.

"All the fears that we were worried about not too long ago," he said, "have not gone away."

Also at the forefront for many traders was the news that NYSE Euronext, the parent of the New York Stock Exchange, planned to sell itself to Intercontinental-Exchange, an upstart and lesser-known exchange operator based in Atlanta. NYSE Euronext's stock surged \$8.20 to \$32.25. The boost at Intercontinental-Exchange was much more modest, with the stock rising \$1.79, or just more than 1 percent, to \$130.10. That signals traders think the proposed deal could be more beneficial to NYSE Euronext than to its potential buyer. Even without the complications of the budget negotiations, the U.S. economy has been difficult to read, a pattern that continued Thursday.

The government said the U.S. economy grew at an annual rate of 3.1 percent over the summer, higher than the previous estimate of 2.7 percent. But growth is likely to slow in the current quarter and early next year.

The government also reported that the number of Americans applying for unemployment benefits rose last week, a disappointment after four straight weeks of declines.

The four-week moving average of jobless claims, a less volatile measurement, fell. □



**Vincent Quinones, right, works with fellow traders on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012. The stock market moved between small gains and losses in early trading Thursday, ending mostly in the positive by the closing bell.**

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

ing cuts that would automatically kick in if no budget deal is in place. Some economists fear that would push the U.S. back into recession. But even a successful compromise is no guarantee that the market will soar. The market already assumes that a budget com-

age TradingBlock in Chicago. "It just stops things from getting worse."

Biggam predicted that the economy's growth next year will remain anemic. Problems that the headlines over budget impasse have pushed out of the public consciousness,



## STREET BRIEFS

### Nike's 2Q net income drops

**BEAVERTON, Ore. (AP)** — Nike says its second-quarter net income fell 18 percent as the European economy remained weak and growth slowed in China. But the results topped Wall Street expectations and Nike's stock rose more than 4 percent in aftermarket trading. The world's largest athletic gear maker says net income for the three months ended Nov. 30 fell to \$384 million, or \$1.14 per share. That compares with \$469 million, or \$1.03 per share, last year when it had about 3 percent more shares outstanding. Revenue rose 7 percent to \$5.96 billion. Analysts expected \$1 per share on revenue of \$6.01 billion. □

### Apple appeals Samsung case

**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** — Apple is appealing a judge's refusal to bar Samsung smartphones from the U.S. market after a jury found Samsung used some Apple technology without permission. Apple's lawyers notified U.S. District Court Judge Lucy Koh on Thursday that the company would try to overturn her order with the appeal to the San Francisco-based 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Apple Inc. demanded the sales ban after a jury in August found Samsung Electronic Inc.'s had "infringed" six of Apple's patents in creating some two dozen smartphones. The jury ordered Samsung to pay Apple \$1.05 billion. On Monday, Koh rejected Apple's demand. □



# Sell order for the New York Stock Exchange

**STEVE ROTHWELL**

**AP Business Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The Big Board just isn't so big anymore.

In a deal that highlights the dwindling stature of what was once a centerpiece of capitalism, the New York Stock Exchange is being sold to a little-known rival for \$8 billion — \$3 billion less than it would have fetched in a proposed takeover just last year.

The buyer is IntercontinentalExchange, a 12-year-old exchange headquartered in Atlanta that deals in investing contracts known as futures.

Intercontinental Exchange, known as ICE, said Thursday that little would change

a second.

Three decades ago, the floor of the New York exchange was full of bustling traders. Today, one of its largest booths belongs to the cable news channel CNBC, which broadcasts there for most of the business day.

The introduction of negotiated, rather than fixed, commissions for securities transactions, in May 1975, marked the start of a gradual decline in brokerage fees for traditional stock trading.

It also gave rise to so-called discount brokerages, like Charles Schwab, that offered to trade for customers at lower rates.

"The cash equities business

expert on stock exchanges at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business.

Futures contracts are written by exchanges and must be bought and sold in the same place — as opposed to stocks, which can be bought and sold on any exchange, Angel said. That gives futures exchanges more pricing power.

Stock trading is a "dog-eat-dog business where the profit margin per share is measured not in pennies, not in tenths of pennies, but in hundredths of pennies," said Angel, who also sits on the board of Direct Edge, a smaller stock exchange.

NYSE Euronext was formed in a 2007 merger when

holders represented some of the world's largest energy companies and financial institutions, according to the company's most recent annual report.

Its stated mission was to transform the energy futures market by providing more transparency. The company has expanded through acquisitions during the last decade and went public — on the NYSE — in November 2005.

Analysts forecast that ICE's revenue will reach \$1.4 billion this year, more than double the \$574 million it reported in 2007.

"We believe the combined company will be better positioned to compete and serve customers across a broad range of asset classes by uniting our global brands, expertise and infrastructure," said ICE Chairman and CEO Jeffrey Sprecher. Sprecher will keep his positions. Four members of the NYSE board will be added to ICE's board, expanding it to 15 members. For each share of NYSE Euronext stock that they own, shareholders can choose either \$33.12 in cash, roughly a quarter-share of ICE, or a combination of \$11.27 in cash and roughly one-sixth of a share of ICE.

NYSE's stock jumped \$8.20, or 34 percent, to \$32.25 in heavy trading shortly after the market opened. ICE's stock closed up \$1.79, or 1.4 percent, at \$130.1 after falling at the open of trading. ICE plans to pay for the cash part of the acquisition with a combination of cash and existing debt. It added that the deal will help it cut costs and should increase its earnings more than 15 percent in the first year after the deal closes.

The deal has been approved by the boards of both companies, but still needs the approvals by regulators and shareholders of both companies. It's expected to close in the second half of next year. Caldwell, of Caldwell Securities, said that this combination of companies and the pressure of ever-declining fees will likely lead to further mergers in the exchange business. □



**IntercontinentalExchange Chairman and CEO Jeffrey Sprecher, left, and NYSE CEO Duncan Niederauer pose for a photo on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012. The New York Stock Exchange is being sold to a rival exchange for about \$8 billion, ending more than two centuries of independence for the iconic Big Board. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)**

for the trading floor at the corner of Wall and Broad streets, in Manhattan's financial district.

But the clout of the two-centuries-old NYSE has gradually been eroded over decades by the relentless advance of technology and regulatory changes. Its importance today is mostly symbolic.

The NYSE dates to 1792, when 24 brokers and merchants traded stocks under a buttonwood tree on Wall Street. But today most trading doesn't require face-to-face meeting at all. It's done on computers that match thousands of orders

in America has effectively been obliterated," said Thomas Caldwell, chairman of Caldwell Securities in Toronto and a shareholder in the New York exchange's parent company, NYSE Euronext.

He said that the jewel of the deal is not the New York exchange but Liffe, a futures exchange founded in London, further underlining the growing importance of the futures markets.

While brokerage fees have declined, futures exchanges have retained profit margins, said James Angel, an associate professor in finance and an

NYSE Group, parent company of the exchange, got together with Euronext, which owned stock exchanges in Europe.

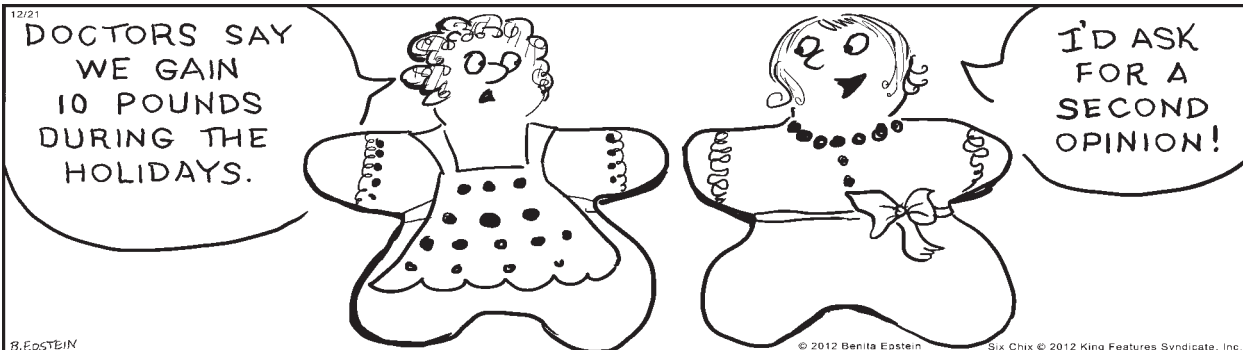
It has been looking for a partner. Last year, ICE and Nasdaq OMX Group Inc., which competes with the NYSE for stock listings, made an \$11 billion bid to buy NYSE Euronext. But that deal fell apart after regulators raised antitrust concerns. Deutsche Boerse AG, a German company, made a bid for NYSE Euronext, but that was scuttled by European regulators. ICE was established in May 2000. Its founding share-



Mutts



6 Chix



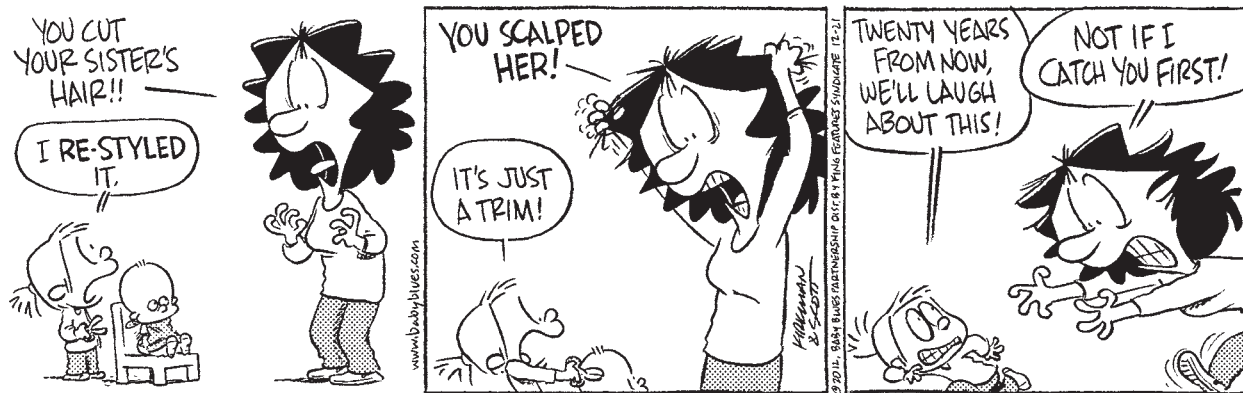
Blondie



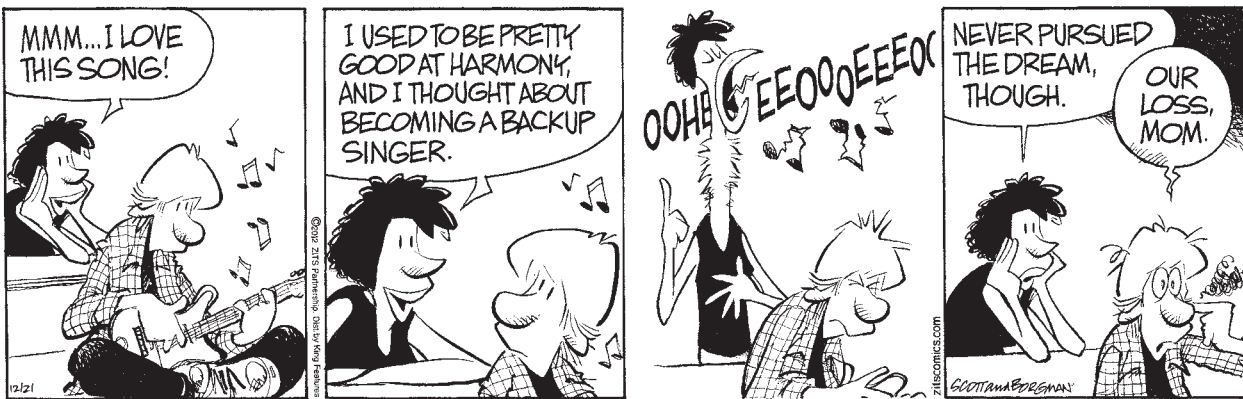
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

6				5	4			7
	2						9	
		4				8		
5			3		8			
7								6
			9		7			1
		5				4		
	8						3	
9			5	1				8

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

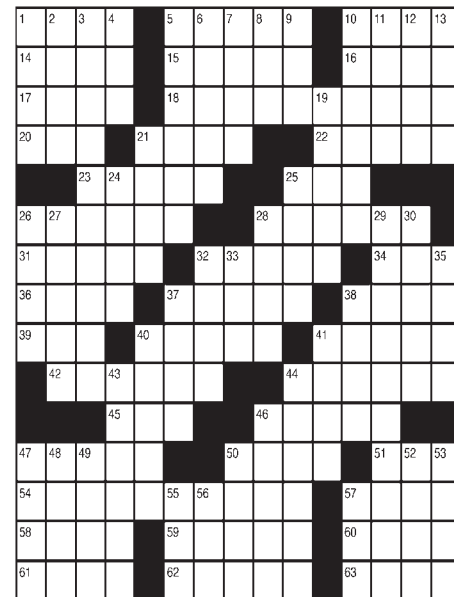
6	1	7	2	3	9	8	5	4
5	3	8	4	7	6	9	1	2
2	9	4	1	5	8	3	7	6
4	2	3	8	1	7	5	6	9
9	7	6	3	4	5	1	2	8
1	8	5	6	9	2	7	4	3
8	4	1	5	6	3	2	9	7
7	6	2	9	8	1	4	3	5
3	5	9	7	2	4	6	8	1

ACROSS

- Expanse of grass
- Play a guitar
- Finds a sum
- Huge continent
- Ascended
- Boyfriend
- Wind direction indicator
- Unfortunate
- Likely
- Created
- Group of eight
- Sidestep
- Oxlike African antelope
- Undresses
- Shakespeare's "Julius"
- Toppers for fancy crackers
- Pennants
- Kook
- Heartburn causer
- Housetops
- Mr. Amaz
- Late Russert
- Sudden increase
- Tomato \_\_\_; thick sauce
- \_\_\_ up; joined forces
- One who dies for his beliefs
- Enraged
- Dirtyness
- Happen
- \_\_\_ up; form a row
- Recede
- Shining
- Actor with the leading role
- Atlas pages
- Competed
- Chokes
- Argument
- Implied, though not spoken
- Lunch spot
- Painkiller
- Out of practice
- Nixon's successor
- Journal
- Bleachers level

DOWN

- Volcanic output
- Letters of urgency



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/21/12

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

K	I	N	S	P	R	A	T	M	O	A	T
O	N	E	S	A	L	I	B	I	U	N	D
I	N	C	H	L	O	N	E	R	S	T	A
S	K	E	D	A	D	D	L	E	C	O	M
			K	I	D	S		L	E	A	
S	P	R	E	E	S		C	R	E	A	T
P	A	I	L	S		M	O	I	S	T	N
A	N	N	S		L	A	M	P	S		W
D	I	G		T	A	X	I	S		M	I
E	C	S	T	A	T	I	C		F	I	N
			R	U	E			F	I	N	D
S	A	G	A		N	O	V	E	L	T	I
A	V	I	D		E	V	E	R	T		N
L	O	V	E		S	A	R	A	H		G
E	W	E	R		S	L	Y	L			D

(c) 2012 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

12/21/12

- Regretted
- Move suddenly
- Intelligent
- Lose color
- Makes laugh
- Mix
- Penalized
- monetarily
- Make eyes at
- Potter's material
- Refer to
- Not taped
- Tub activity
- Hee-haw
- Golfer Ernie
- Just purchased
- Bath with seats



## Brian McGrory to become Boston Globe's next editor

**CHRISTINE HAUGHNEY**  
© 2012 New York Times

The Boston Globe announced Thursday that Brian McGrory, a columnist and former metro editor and a Boston native with deep roots in the community, would be its next editor.

The appointment is effective immediately.

McGrory, who has worked at The Globe for the past 23 years, will replace Martin Baron, the newspaper's editor for the past decade. Baron has been named the editor of The Washington Post, and officially left The Globe last week.

Chris Mayer, the Globe's publisher, said he chose McGrory from a pool of internal and external candidates because of his ties to Boston and his ability to motivate the newsroom. "He's a terrific mentor and leader in terms of inspiring great journalism," Mayer said.

"It's that ability to inspire the talent and attracting and retaining the talent."



**Brian McGrory, left, the new editor of The Boston Globe, with Chris Mayer, The Globe's publisher, in Boston, Dec. 20, 2012. (Suzanne Kreiter/The Boston Globe)**

McGrory said that he plans to build on "the accountability journalism the paper has been known for" and doesn't plan to make drastic changes.

"After Marty Baron's extremely successful tenure here, we don't need any overhaul," said McGrory. "We don't need a drastic change in direction." □

### Caribbean Palm Village Resort

**Sale Weeks 51 and 52**  
**Good Selection Still Available**  
**Come Visit or Contact**  
Sales.Cpv@hotmail.com

**USA 978 530 6077**  
**Aruba 297 592 0500, or 732 5392**

Tel: 582-0697 / 583-7484  
Schotland str. 70

**Extend your Stay at**  
**Quality Apartments**

\*Studio & Loft Apts. \*Fully Furnished  
\*Kitchen / Airco / Cable TV \*Swimming Pool  
Less than 1 mile from Eagle Beach & 4 large supermarkets.  
Feel free to contact or visit us.  
Mon - Fri: 8am-7pm. Sat & Sun: 9am-5pm.



### FOR SALE



#### Ruby 37

This well maintained property with beautiful views on 691 m² of land is located in North. The property comes with swimming pool, jacuzzi, alarm system, landscaped garden, covered back patio, garage, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. *This property is available right away!*

**US \$ 875.000,-**



Best & Solid Real Estate

**Palm Beach 4-G**  
Tel.: 586 4242  
[www.arubahouses.com](http://www.arubahouses.com)

# Classifieds

### FOR RENT

#### (short term rental)

2 bedroom apartment, sleeps 4  
4 walling distance Eagle Beach, Supermarkets, Golf Course.  
\$195.00 a night  
Call: 566-6273 / 00297-566-273  
E-mail: hmangroelal2@hotmail.com

197974

### FOR RENT

#### Christmas/ New Year Special For Rent

week 51 Aruba Beach Club groundfloor 4p \$750  
Dec. 22-29  
week 52 Paradise Villas  
Dec. 29-Jan 5 \$700  
week 1 Casa del Mar 6p \$1100  
Jan 5-12  
Tel. 583-4403 / 560-3297

197995

### FOR SALE

**Marriott Christmas wk**  
beautiful 2 bedr, 2 bath  
washer/dryer in kitchen, ocean view sleeps 8 \$45.000  
contact 586-4231 or  
xtmsriberg@hotmail.com

197975

### SALON & SPA/ SPECIAL

Manicure y Pedicure \$30  
Massage (50 min) \$45  
Facial (basic) \$45  
Possibility to pick up!!!  
Bella Vista salon & spa / Seroe Patrishi 43-A  
Call now!! 583-7338 / 737-1408

197999

### FOR SALE

#### Paradise Beach Villas

wk 50 -2br \$8500  
wk 52 - 1br \$9.000  
Tropicana Resort  
wk 51 1br \$2.500  
weeks 5/6/7 \$1.500 each  
Pls call. 732-2788  
E-mail:  
sales@arubadirectdeals.com

198151A

### FOR RENT

#### Paradise Beach Villas

1 Br Jan 5-12 \$1.100  
2 Br Jan 6-13 \$1.200  
2 Br Jan 19-26 \$1.200  
Pls call. 732-2788  
E-mail:  
rental@arubadirectdeals.com

198151A

### FOR SALE

House for sale by owner  
Close to the beach in Alto Vista in nice Residential area, property land smart electricity hot water. price at \$160.000  
for more info. 594-6639

197998

### FOR SALE

Condo in Gold Coast  
Everything's included in this 2 Br 2 ½ bath unit check it out now at [www.arubarental.info](http://www.arubarental.info)  
or call 562-0735 free pick up

198153

**DOCTOR ON DUTY**  
**ORANJESTAD**  
**21 December**  
Dr. Gerrit Croes

**Pharmacy on duty**  
**ORANJESTAD:**  
**Botica del Pueblo Tel: 582-1253**  
**SAN NICOLAAS:**  
**Botica Centro Medico Tel: 584-5794**

**Police**  
Police 581-1100  
Oranjestad 582-4000  
Noord 587-0009  
Sta. Cruz 585-4710  
Savaneta 584-7000  
San Nicolas 584-5000

**Emergency Numbers**  
Emergency 911  
Police 100  
Fire Dept. 115  
Fire Dept. II 582-1108  
Police Tipline 11141  
Hospital 527-4000

**Oranjestad**  
Ambulance 582-1234  
Police 582-4000

**San Nicolas**  
Ambulance 584-5050  
Police Station 584-5000  
BGD San Nicolas 584-1606  
Valero Security 584-1720

**Services**  
Information 118  
Setar 582-5151  
Taxi 582-2116  
Taxi- Tas 587-5900  
Profesional Taxi 588-0035  
Taxi D.T.S. 587-2300  
Service Aruba 583-3232

**CRUISE SHIP**  
  
**21 Crown Princess**  
**Westerdam**

Aruba Airport	Tel: 524-2424
American Airlines	Tel: 582-2700
Avianca	Tel: 588-0059
Dutch Antilles	Tel: 588-1900
Insel Air	Tel: 588-9314
Jet Blue	Tel: 588-2244
Spirit Airlines	Tel: 582-7117
Suriname Airways	Tel: 582-7896
Tiara Air	Tel: 588-4272
Venezolana	Tel: 583-7674

**Foundation Fellowship Clinic**  
Tel: 584-6440  
Alcoholism & Drug Addiction, Anonymity guaranteed  
**Foundation Anti-Droga Aruba**  
(FADA) Tel: 583-2999  
**Foundation Respetami**  
Tel: 582-4433  
**Diabetic Foundation Arubano**  
Tel: 583-3808  
**Narcotics Anonymous**  
Tel: 583-8989  
**Foundation Amor pa Prohimo**  
Tel: 583-3354 / 586-6976  
**Women in Difficulties Foundation**  
Tel: 583-5400

**ANTIQUARIAN FURNITURE SALE**

**30% Disc**

**Rococo Plaza**  
**Tanki Leendert**  
**Rd 4A ph 741-5640**  
**OPEN: 9 - 1**  
[WWW.ANTIQUESARUBA.COM](http://WWW.ANTIQUESARUBA.COM)



[illegible]





**J.H. YEE'S**  
珍味 Asian Bistro

LUNCH SPECIALS starting at \$14.95

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL \$14.95

HOUSE SPECIAL \$16.95

**NOW SERVING TEPPANYAKI (hibachi cooking table)**

SUSHI BAR (lunch and dinner)

**OPEN**  
Lunch 12 pm-3pm  
Dinner 6 pm-11 pm  
**EVERY DAY**



Located at South Beach Centre | Palm Beach 55, Aruba | Tel: 586 3888 | Fax: 586 8883

## Scarlett Johansson tones down the sex as Maggie

**MARK KENNEDY**

**AP Drama Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Scarlett Johansson says she won't be bringing sexy back to Broadway.

The actress with the pouty lips and gentle curves that GQ magazine once called "Babe of the Year" is determined to be a more naturalistic Maggie the Cat in a revival of Tennessee Williams' "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" that opens Jan. 17. That's the same role Elizabeth Taylor embodied while virtually purring in a satin slip. And her successors — Anika Noni Rose, Ashley Judd and Kathleen Turner, among them — all played it to variously breathless, sexy degrees.

But Johansson talks about how she approached the predatory feline of Williams' classic Southern play sounding like the way she herself would prefer to be described.

"I think her sexuality is often overplayed and over-appreciated. It's such an unimportant part of this story," Johansson says one recent morning during rehearsals. "I mean, it comes with the circumstance, of course, and the settling and the words — that's already there. There's no need to drape yourself all over the stage and roll around in a satin sheet."

If that puts a dent in the box office, so be it, says the four-time Golden Globe nominated star of "Lost in Translation" and "The Avengers." Quips Johansson: "There's always the

half-price ticket line."

The new production is led by director Rob Ashford and co-stars Benjamin Walker as Maggie's drunken, disinterested husband, Ciaran Hinds as Big Daddy and Debra Monk as Big Mama.

"It's really a beautiful play, really a perfect play, I think," she says, smoldering even though she wears a demure dark pantsuit and stripped top. "If the play fails, it's our fault."

Johansson arrives for her morning interview already tired, having woken before dawn to appear on the "Today" show. "If I have any more coffee, I'll explode into another stratosphere," the actress warns.

Johansson, 28, has already proved she has the acting chops for Broadway, having won a best featured actress Tony Award in 2010 in Arthur Miller's "A View From the Bridge" opposite Liev Schreiber.

It was a victory from a stage novice that silenced critics who had moaned about movie stars with dubious skills showing up in Times Square simply to sell tickets. Johansson insist she had nothing to prove.

"I'm just happy the stage door is still open and I can walk through it," she says. "I was just happy to survive the run, really. Honestly. I expected to be lambasted. I knew that was a possibility going into it. But that's OK." She has thrown herself into her new role, seeing Maggie as "a force of nature" and having "an almost di-



In this Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2012 photo, American actress, model and singer, Scarlett Johansson, currently starring in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" on Broadway, poses for a portrait, at Sardi's in New York. Associated Press

vine determination." Ashford says Johansson came into rehearsal the first day already having memorized her lines, impressing her co-stars. "She loves the work, she loves creating the characters," he says. "She's an actress. She's not a theater star or a movie star. She's an actor first and so she's both, therefore. She can do both, as she's proven." Johansson has avoided as best she can seeing other actresses play Maggie, although she was in the audience to see Judd portray her opposite Jason Patric in 2003.

She has managed to avoid ever catching Taylor in the 1958 classic film, except for a few minutes. It happened while she was looking up a

Marlon Brando film online and YouTube recommended a clip from "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof."

"I clicked and watched a couple of minutes and I realized it was a terrible idea," she says. "Not saying anything about the film, it's just a different version of the story." She and Ashford are after a more naturalized take. To that end, Maggie will be trying to seduce her husband emotionally, not physically. "What we've set out from the beginning is to take these characters off these pedestals where they've been placed and try to put them back in the play," Ashford says.

OK, then what about the poster for the show, which features a reclining Johans-

son, lips slightly apart, loosely wrapped in white material and looking almost post-coital? Ashley sees not sex, but ache. "I think it's her longing," he says.

Johansson had been looking for a way to return to Broadway since "A View From the Bridge" closed. She sifted through new scripts and classics, searching for something meaty.

"I think after doing 'View,' I realized that I didn't want to work on anything that wasn't challenging in some way and that brought me into a whole different world. I didn't want to do an easy job," she says. "One day I was daydreaming and remembered 'Cat' and thought, 'I should read that again,'" she recalls. □





**LE** - In this Monday, Oct. 1, 2012 file photo, Lady Gaga arrives at the Versace atelier in Milan, Italy. Lady Gaga is taking her Born This Way Foundation on the road. **Associated Press**

## Lady Gaga takes youth foundation on the road

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Lady Gaga is taking her Born This Way Foundation on the road. The singer announced Thursday that the Born Brave Bus Tour will tailgate outside her upcoming U.S. concerts and provide a space for 13- to 25-year-olds to learn more about local resources on anti-bullying, suicide prevention and mental health services. Her foundation focuses on youth empowerment and

self-confidence. Organizations like The Trevor Project, Campus Pride and the National Association of School Psychologists will assist on the bus. People will not need a ticket to the show to participate. The Born Brave Bus will be open ahead of each Gaga concert for several hours. The U.S. leg of the Born This Way Ball Tour kicks off Jan. 14 in Tacoma, Washington. □

## Cuba Gooding Jr., Vanessa Williams Broadway-bound

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Cuba Gooding Jr., Vanessa Williams and Condola Rashad will be joining Cicely Tyson on "The Trip to Bountiful." Producers said Thursday that the trio have signed up to star in a revival of Horton Foote's moving play about acceptance and coming home. It first appeared on Broadway in 1953 and became a 1985 film starring Geraldine Page. Tyson, who is an Academy Award nominee and is an Emmy Award winner, will now have some glittering company onstage: Gooding has an Oscar, Williams is a Tony and Emmy nominee, and Rashad has a Tony nomination for "Stick Fly." The revival will appear for just 14 weeks and previews begin March 31 at the Ste-



In this April 18, 2012 file photo, actor Cuba Gooding Jr. attends the Tribeca Film Festival opening night premiere of "The Five-Year Engagement" at the Ziegfeld Theatre in New York. **Associated Press**

phen Sondheim Theatre. Opening night is set for April 23. Michael Wilson will direct. □

# Grammy nominee Bobby Sanabria feels like a winner



In this Feb. 10, 2008 file photo, Latin jazz musician Bobby Sanabria arrives at the 50th Annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. **Associated Press.**

**MESFIN FEKADU**  
**AP Music Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Bobby Sanabria already feels like a winner. The Latin jazz musician, who led the protest against the Recording Academy when it downsized from 109 to 78 Grammy categories last year, is nominated for best Latin jazz album — one of the awards that had been eliminated but returns next year. "We're very proud," Sanabria said in a recent interview. "It just places emphasis on the importance of this uniquely

American art form. ... Of all the forms of music that are still getting recognition from the Grammys, this is one of the most disenfranchised forms because it isn't part of mainstream culture." The Recording Academy announced in June that it would reinstate the best Latin Jazz album award and added two others. Sanabria's nomination in the category for "Multiverse" — along with his Big Band — is his third time competing in the field. His band's song, "Afro-Cuban Jazz Suite for Ellington," is also nominated for best

instrumental arrangement; the nomination goes to arranger Michael Philip Mossman.

New York-born Sanabria said he hopes the other categories come back as well.

"CD sales are down, so the more categories we have, it's just good business," he said.

The Academy shook up the music industry when it announced in April 2011 that it would downsize its categories to make the awards more competitive. That meant eliminating categories by gender, so men and women compete in the same vocal categories. Artists like Herbie Hancock, Paul Simon and Bill Cosby complained, and Sanabria led the group that filed a lawsuit, which was dismissed.

The 55-year-old drummer and percussionist said the Grammys cut is a sign of the dying appreciation of jazz and blues music in American culture.

"We live in age now where DJs are more respected than musicians, and I have nothing against DJs, but there's something to be said for the artistry of a human being taking a musical instrument and performing at a virtuosic level on it, and it takes years of dedication," he said. □

## Broadway musical 'Chicago' to enter history books

**MARK KENNEDY**  
**AP Drama Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The musical "Chicago" is about to swagger into the history books again. Thursday night's performance of the edgy musical will be No. 6,681, meaning it becomes the third longest-running show in Broadway history. It snatches that title from "Les Miserables." The only shows that have

run longer are "Cats," with almost 7,500 shows, and "The Phantom of the Opera," which is still going after more than 10,300 performances.

"Chicago" took over third place on the list last year, beating out "A Chorus Line."

Set in the 1920s, "Chicago" is a scathing satire of how show business and the media make celebrities out of criminals. □



In this undated publicity photo provided by The Publicity Office, Amy Spanger will star as Roxie Hart when the Broadway musical hit "CHICAGO" plays its record-breaking 6,681st performance at the Ambassador Theatre on Thursday, Dec. 20, 2012, in New York. **Associated Press**



# Watch Out Below!!!



MAUREEN DOWD

© 2012 New York Times

**WASHINGTON** – The end of the world never comes at a convenient time.

It never comes, for instance, when you're sitting in front of a blank computer screen trying to think of a column. But the end is nigh, according to ancient Mayans and Washington mandarins. We have reached the quivering moment of truth that Jon Stewart calls "Cliff-pocalypsemageddonacaust." However the Mayan prediction and the fiscal cliff work out in the next few days, I hope we are talking about the end of talking about the end. It's tedious to always be suspended in midair, like Wile E. Coyote or Thelma and Louise. The attempts by some to continually whirl the whole American population into a state of apocalyptic excitement are exhausting.

We have enough real cliffhangers – Will Carrie and Brody descend into craziness together or go to a movie and chill, going zero dark flirty at "Zero Dark Thirty"? Will RGIII's knee buckle against Cleveland on Sunday? – without creating fake ones.

There's a new American trend in hysteria. Everything now is in italics, punctuated by exclamation points!!! As entertaining as Carrie Mathison's bouts of hysteria have been in "Homeland," stirring up hysteria in real life, whether to draw clicks, eyeballs or votes, is not a good idea.

Cliff dwellers in our society may think that facing the guillotine focuses the mind. But the cliff metaphor is so overused it makes me want to walk off one. Don't even mention Cliff Clavin, Cliff Huxtable, Cliff Robertson, Jimmy Cliff or Heathcliff (either on the moors, in Cliffs Notes or in the funny papers.) If your Christmas presents don't come from Amazon in time, you're going over the gift cliff. If your boyfriend bails, you're going over the romance cliff. If he comes back, you could be going over the marriage cliff. Journalists now have to add an extra coup de grace ("Fiscal cliff crash") or double metaphor ("Clock is ticking for fiscal cliff") or raffish cartoons to juice things up. The new cover of The Economist features Uncle Sam, waving a Jack Daniels bottle, with the Statue of Liberty, wearing cool shades and smoking a doobie, plunging into the Grand Canyon in a red, white and blue Thunderbird with the license plate "Debt 1."

Other metaphors have been suggested: "fiscal obstacle course," "debt bomb," "austerity bomb." But we're stuck in the year of cliffian thinking. There are cliffians, who predict dire consequences if a deal is not reached, and anti-cliffians. But no matter if you're into Keynes, Krugmania or Ayn Rynism, looking at things as a cliff is not the most constructive way to live. It's sheer madness. Apocalypse is a very bad place in which to think clearly about anything.

There are people in both parties who have wanted to keep everything on a war footing for years, a Manichaean battle between good and evil, right and wrong. Every election brings more insanity, hyperbole and demagoguery. But scaring people is generally not a good way to get people to understand things. It's like the color-coded warnings for terrorist attacks that lost all meaning amid the fearmongering.

Especially in emergencies, grave crises like a nuclear threat or a terrorist attack, you need calm people who don't think the world is going to end.

Lincoln wasn't cliffy. As the new Steven Spielberg movie shows, Lincoln had a goal and pursued it methodically through various means, some shady. He wasn't interested in hysteria. It had no political use for him.

The BBC examined the etymology of the phrase of the moment. The lexicographer Ben Zimmer discovered that an 1893 editorial in The Chicago Tribune warned: "The free silver shriekers are striving to tumble the United States over the same fiscal precipice."

Zimmer traced the first use of "fiscal cliff" to the property section of The New York Times in 1957, in an article about people overextending their finances to buy their first home. Ben Bernanke imprinted the term on the public consciousness last February, pointing ominously toward Jan. 1.

But Derek Thompson, the business editor at The Atlantic, told the BBC that if you had to go topographical, a slope or a hill was more accurate. "You talk about a cliff, it's extremely sudden and the second you step off the edge you plunge to your death," he said, adding: "We're not going to fall off anything."

Language is important, he said, because it can provoke a panicky deal rather than a smart deal. He suggested that a more apt metaphor might be dieting after bingeing, as in "fiscal fast."

"There will be a short, sharp recession in early to middle of next year, which is more like falling on your face after fasting too vigorously, and then the economy is going to grow," he said. The really bad news is that, even if we survive this abyss, there are more coming, with the debt ceiling cliff and the spending bill cliff dead ahead. Once you start with the cliffs, you can fall into cliffinity – with endless cliff riffs on the horizon.

Cliff talk is not cool talk. □



# Should Kids Play Football?



JOE NOCERA

© 2012 New York Times

**CHAPEL HILL, N.C.** – "Do your children play football?" I asked Kevin Guskiewicz the other day over breakfast. "Yes," he replied, as I nearly fell off my chair. "My 16-year-old and my 12-year-old played football this year. They had a great experience."

Guskiewicz is, among other things, the chairman of the department of exercise and sports science at the University of North Carolina here. His primary area of study is the connection between recurring concussions, depression and cognitive impairment. At their worst, these are symptoms of degenerative brain disease called chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE. Guskiewicz's research on the lasting damage repeated concussions can do to a football player's brain helped persuade the National Football League to tinker with the rules to make the game's most dangerous play – the kickoff – a little less dangerous. He has been awarded a MacArthur "genius" grant and has been profiled by Malcolm Gladwell in The New Yorker.

Which is why I had naturally assumed that he would be opposed to children's playing full-contact football. CTE is a disease that used to be associated solely with box-

ers. (Indeed, it used to be called "dementia pugilistica.") But over the past eight or nine years, researchers like Guskiewicz have been studying its effect on other athletes, especially football players.

Thanks not only to their work, but also to a rash of suicides by former (and in several cases, current) football players, as well as lawsuits that have been filed against both the NFL and the NCAA, the issue has gotten enormous visibility. Picking up on the news, many parents now don't let their children play football because, after all, we all know it is too dangerous. Don't we?

As I discovered after talking to a number of brain researchers who are studying CTE, the science really isn't able to make that definitive claim – at least not yet. What we know for sure is that multiple concussions can lead to CTE. Dr. Ann McKee, a co-director at Boston University's Center for the Study of Traumatic Encephalopathy, recently published a study with colleagues that examined, posthumously, brain samples of 85 people who had repeated mild brain trauma as opposed to concussions. Some 80 percent of them, the study found, showed evidence of CTE.

Does this mean that football players are more likely to get CTE, just because of the relentless pounding they take? Yes, says McKee: "Exposure to the sport itself is associated with this disease."

Guskiewicz, however, is not yet convinced.

"Studies like that clearly show that CTE exists in players without a history of concussions, but they haven't completely connected the dots. It's a little like saying that if there are a rash of ankle sprains on a tennis team, and they all wear Nike tennis shoes, then the tennis shoes must be the culprit."

"I always use the word 'recognized' when I talk about concus-

sions," said a third researcher, Dr. Robert Cantu, who is also a co-director of the Boston University center. After all, he says, in the bad old days – which is really just a few years ago – team doctors often missed signs of a concussion.

"If you are convinced that players without a history of concussions really didn't have concussions, then yes: Repetitive headbanging alone can cause CTE," he says. "But we also know that some 80 percent of mild concussions go unrealized."

Still, he said, "Our data is showing that it is not just recognized concussions but total brain trauma that counts." When I asked Cantu if he believed that kids should be allowed to play football, he practically growled at me. "Haven't you read my book?" he asked. Entitled "Concussions and Our Kids," and published just a few months ago, it argues that children should be confined to touch football until they turn 14. "The young brain is more vulnerable," he said. "Besides there is just too much that we don't know yet."

So why does Guskiewicz disagree with Cantu – a man with whom he has co-authored many a paper on CTE? Like many people who study CTE, Guskiewicz is a football fan. Although there are those who now advocate abolishing football altogether – a pipe dream if ever there was one – his goal is to help make the game safer. Part of that, in his view, is teaching proper techniques that protect the head. "I worry that if we don't teach the right way to block and tackle early, by the time they get to high school – which is when the physics of the game really changes – it will be too late," he says.

And what does McKee think about children's playing football? When I posed it to her, I could hear her sighing over the phone. "I'm really conflicted about that," she replied.

Aren't we all? □



# In Mexico, New Agers hope Dec. 21 brings new era

**MARK STEVENSON**  
**Associated Press**

**MERIDA, Mexico (AP)** — The crystal skulls have spoken: The world is not going to end.

American seer Star Johnsen-Moser led a whooping, dancing, drum-beating ceremony Thursday in the heart of Mayan territory to consult several of the life-sized crystal skulls, which adherents claim were passed down by the ancient Maya.

The skulls weren't the only inheritances left by the ancient civilization that have been making waves this week: The supposed end of the Maya long-count calendar on Friday has prompted a wave of doomsday speculation across the globe.

"This is not the end of the world, this is the beginning of the new world," Johnsen-Moser said at a gathering of hundreds of spiritualists at a convention center in Merida. "It is most important that we hold a positive, beautiful reality for ourselves and our planet ... Fear is out of place."

The supposed 5 a.m. Friday doomsday hour had already arrived in several parts of the world with no sign of the apocalypse.

The social network Imgur posted photos of clocks turning midnight in the Asia-Pacific region with messages such as: "The world has not ended. Sincerely, New Zealand."

In Merida, the celebration of the cosmic dawn began with a fumbling of the sacred fire meant to honor the calendar's conclusion. Gabriel Lemus, the white-haired guardian of the flame, burned his finger on the kindling and later had to scoop up a burning log that was knocked out of the ceremonial brazier onto the wooden stage.

Still, the white-clad Lemus was convinced that it was a good start, as he was joined by about 1,000 other shamans, seers, stargazers, crystal enthusiasts, yogis, sufis and swamis at the convention center about an hour and a half from the

Mayan ruins at Chichen Itza.

"It is a cosmic dawn," said Lemus. "We will recover the ability to communicate telepathically and levitate objects ... like our ancestors did."

Celebrants later held their arms in the air in a salute to

Terry Kvasnik, 32, a stunt man and acrobat from Manchester, England, said his motto for the day is "Be in love, don't be in fear." While he didn't know exactly which ceremony he'll attend on Friday, he guaranteed with a smile, "I'm going to be in the happiest

many participants chanted mantras to the blazing Yucatan sun, which quickly burned the fair-skinned crowd.

Violeta Simarro, a secretary from Perpignan, France, took shelter under a nearby awning and noted that the new age won't necessarily

Participants from Asian, North American, South American and European shamanistic traditions amiably mingled with the Mexican hosts.

"This is the beginning of a change in priorities and perceptions. We are all one," said Esther Romo, a Mexico City businesswoman who works in art promotion and galleries. "No limits, no boundaries, no nationalities, just fusion." Gabriel Romero, a Los Angeles based practitioner of crystal skull channeling, was so sure this isn't the end of the world that he scheduled a welcome ceremony for the new age at dawn on Saturday morning, with plans to erect a stele, a stone monument used by the Maya to commemorate important dates or events.

Still, organizers of Yucatan's broader Mayan Culture Festival saw the need to answer the now-debunked idea that the Mayas, who invented an amazingly accurate calendar almost 2,000 years ago, had somehow predicted the end of the world. The Mayas measured time in 394-year periods known as baktuns. Anthropologists believe the 13th baktun ends around Dec. 21, and 13 is considered a sacred number for the Maya. But archaeologists have uncovered Mayan glyphs that refer to dates far, far in the future, long beyond Dec. 21.

Yucatan Gov. Rolando Zapata, whose state is home to Mexico's largest Maya population and has benefited from a boom in tourism, said he too felt the good vibes.

"We believe that the beginning of a new baktun means the beginning of a new era, and we're receiving it with great optimism," Zapata said.

He confirmed that thousands of tourists and spiritualists are expected for Friday's once-in 5,125-year event.

"We have information that all the flights to the city are completely full," Zapata said. □



**A Mayan dancer performs at the Xcaret Eco Theme Park on the outskirts of Playa del Carmen, Mexico, Wednesday, Dec. 19, 2012. Amid a worldwide frenzy of advertisers and new-agers preparing for a Maya apocalypse, one group is approaching Dec. 21 with calm and equanimity, the people whose ancestors supposedly made the prediction in the first place.**

(AP Photo/Israel Leal)

the Thursday morning sun. "The galactic bridge has been established," announced spiritual leader Alberto Arribalzaga, who led the ceremony. "At this moment, spirals of light are entering the center of your head ... Generating powerful vortexes that cover the planet."

Few here believe the world will end on Friday; the summit is scheduled to run through Sunday. Instead, participants say, they are here to celebrate the birth of a new age.

A Mexican Indian seer who calls himself Ac Tah, and who has traveled around Mexico erecting small pyramids he calls "neurological circuits," said he holds high hopes for Dec. 21.

"We are preparing ourselves to receive a huge magnetic field straight from the center of the galaxy," he said.

place I can." Set up in the conference's exhibition hall were dozens of booths, where in addition to having your aura photographed with "Chi" light, you can buy mandalas, get a shamanic cleansing, develop your "golden light" and buy sandals, herbs and whole-grain baked goods. Cleansing here is done studiously and repeatedly, and usually involves copal incense waved around one's body. Visitors could also learn the art of "healing drumming" with a Mexican Otomi Indian master who calls himself Dabadi Thaayroyadi and says his slender, handheld, plate-sized drums are made with prayers embedded into them. He said the drums emit "an intelligent energy" that can heal emotional, physical and social ailments.

During the opening cere-

be all peaches and cream. "It will be a little difficult at first, because the world will need a complete 'nettoyage' (cleaning), because there are so many bad things," she said.

Not all seers endorse the celebration.

Mexico's self-styled "brujo mayor," or chief soothsayer, Antonio Vazquez Alba, warned followers to stay away from all gatherings on Dec. 21, saying, "We have to beware of mass psychosis" that could lead to stampedes or "mass suicides, of the kind we've seen before."

"If you get 1,000 people in one spot and somebody yells 'Fire!' watch out," Vazquez Alba said. "The best thing is to stay at home, at work, in school, and at some point do a relaxation exercise."

Others see the summit as a model for the coming age.